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THEODORE PARKER CENTENNIAL ISSUE

RECENT INTERPRETATIONS OF PARKER:

An Evaluation of the Literature Since 1936

BY HERBERT E. HUDSON

**A DISCOURSE OF MATTERS PERTAINING
TO THEODORE PARKER**

BY JOHN WALLACE LAWS

THEODORE PARKER: *The Man as a Minister*

BY CARL R. SCOVEL

PARKER AS REVOLUTIONARY MORALIST:

From Divinity Hall to Harpers Ferry

BY TRUMAN NELSON

**THE INFLUENCE OF PARKER ON
EUROPEAN THOUGHT**

BY F. C. DEVRIES

FREDERICK MAY ELIOT AS I KNEW HIM

BY LAWRENCE G. BROOKS

BOOK REVIEWS • ANNUAL MEETING 1959

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VOLUME XIII • PART I

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1959-1960

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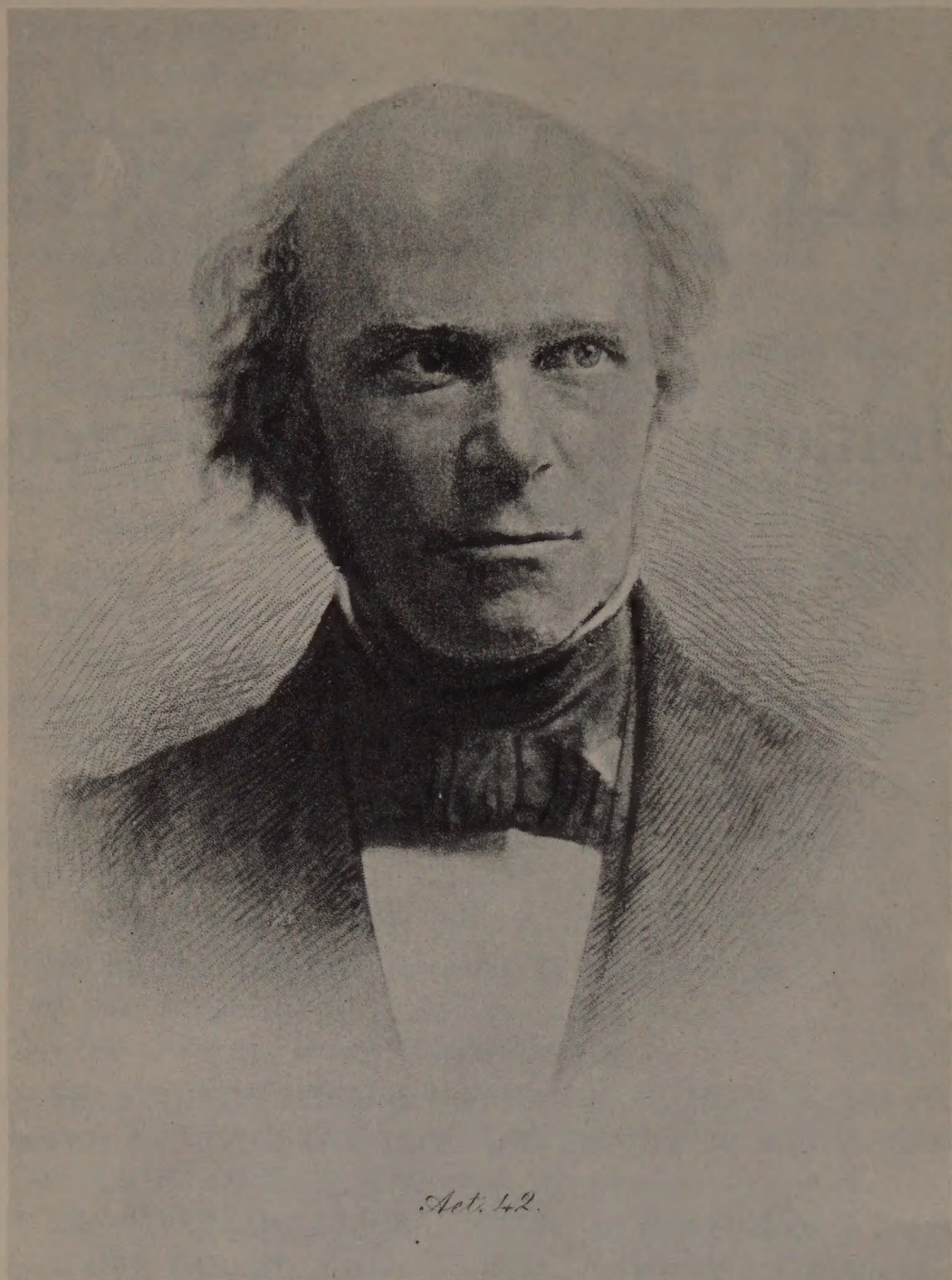
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VOLUME XIII • PART I



Theodore Parker,

1810-1860

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

CONTEMPORARY TRIBUTES

'Tis plain to me that he has achieved a historic immortality here; that he has so woven himself in these few years into the history of Boston, that he can never be left out of your annals. It will not be in the acts of City Councils; nor of obsequious Mayors; nor, in the State House, the proclamations of Governors, with their failing virtue, — failing them at critical moments — that the coming generations will study what really befell; but in the plain lessons of Theodore Parker in this Music Hall, in Faneuil Hall, or in Legislative Committee Rooms, the true temper and authentic record of these days will be read. The next generation will care little for the chances of elections that govern governors now; it will care little for fine gentlemen who behaved shabbily, but it will read very intelligently in his rough story, fortified with exact anecdotes, precise with names and dates, what part was taken by each actor; who threw himself into the cause of humanity, and who came to the rescue of civilization at a hard pinch, and who blocked its course.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Not only ages, but entire civilizations may pass, before another man shall arise, just so gifted and equipped as him whom we commemorate today. It is not so much that his powers were rare in kind, though they were surely rare — very rare in degree; but his distinction is that he combined in himself qualities, which commonly go to the making of a large number of men, and are considered incompatible; and, as oxygen and carbon in their chemical union make flame, and hydrogen and oxygen produce water, though in their separate accumulation the former are cold and the latter dry, so qualities and powers which separately would have made only a multitude of strong men, in their vital union produced that brand of the Lord, that Missouri of manhood, whom we remember as Theodore Parker.

DAVID A. WASSON

I remember . . . how his stalwart frame swept along the avenues of Divinity Hall. I remember the manner of his early preaching. In that was shown what I always thought the chief element of his character and source of his power. He was often utterly overcome by emotion; his utterance choked; tears flowed; his frame shook. It was beyond what was natural, even at that age.

CHARLES M. ELLIS

There is one thing every man may say of this pulpit. It was a live reality, and no sham. Whether tearing theological idols to pieces at West Roxbury, or here, battling with the every-day evils of the streets, it was ever a live voice, and no mechanical or parrot tune: ever fresh from the heart of God . . . As in that story he loved so much to tell, of Michael Angelo, when in the Roman palace Raphael was drawing his figures too small, Angelo sketched a colossal head of fit proportions, and taught Raphael his fault — so Parker criticized these other pulpits, not so much by censure as by creation; by a pulpit proportioned to the hour, broad as humanity, frank as truth, stern as justice, and loving as Christ.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

You may quarrel with [his] theology if you please; I shall not. I like it; I have great faith in it; I accept it. But this I say, in respect to mere abstract theological opinions — the longer I live, the less do I care about them, the less do I make them a test of character. It is nothing to me that any man calls himself a Methodist, or Baptist, or Unitarian, or Universalist. These sectarian shibboleths are easily taken upon the lip, especially when the “offence of the Cross” has ceased. Whoever will, with his theology, grind out the best grist for our common humanity, is the best theologian for me.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

How shall we miss him! The days are to come when we shall know how we miss him. When that great Hall stands closed and silent on the Lord’s day — empty and silent, because there is no one here who has the commanding ability which can bring together those great multitudes Sunday after Sunday, month after month, and year after year, to be taught and fed, — when great crises of the nation come, and pass unexamined, and not understood, because that great masterly power of analysis is taken from us, — when great national crimes are repeated again and again, and not rebuked to the listening ear of the nation, because there is no great power of intellect and knowledge adequate to that work — then we shall remember and feel and mourn the loss of Theodore Parker.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

Excerpts from tributes spoken at the Theodore Parker memorial exercises held in Boston in May and June 1860 after the news of Parker’s death on May tenth in Florence, Italy had reached America. The source is *Tributes to Theodore Parker*, Boston: 1860.

RECENT INTERPRETATIONS OF PARKER: AN EVALUATION OF THE LITERATURE SINCE 1936

BY HERBERT E. HUDSON

Starr King School for the Ministry

I. INTRODUCTION

Major studies on Theodore Parker have a habit of appearing every twenty or thirty years: John Weiss and Octavius B. Frothingham issued their interpretations shortly after Parker's death; John White Chadwick's biography appeared twenty-five years later at the turn of the century; while it wasn't until 1936 that Henry Steel Commager introduced his *Theodore Parker, Yankee Crusader*.¹ Commager's work is often considered the most recent study of Parker, yet by gleaning articles, by taking a chapter here and there from books, one can piece together a substantial body of Parker scholarship that has appeared since its publication. What have been the characteristics and contributions of this literature? Have the limitations of Commager's book been overcome or have its strengths been utilized?² What are the prospects for future Parker study?

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on Theodore Parker since Commager's biography in 1936. Post-Commager interpretations of Parker have for the most part avoided further biographical or integrative attempts and have instead specialized in such areas as Parker's transcendentalism, social reform, political ideas, public speaking, literary theory, and personality.

II. SPECIALIZED TREATMENTS

A. *Transcendentalism*: The foremost area of specialization upon which contemporary scholarship has focused has been Parker's transcendentalism. The question has been raised whether or not Parker really was a transcendentalist. To those aware of his role in the development of American Unitarianism such a question may appear facetious. I am convinced, however, that recent scholarship has been motivated less by the desire to repudiate historical fact than to reappraise for today the relative significance of understanding and intuition in the thought of Theodore Parker.

Although Commager antedates the period under consideration in this paper, his views on Parker's transcendentalism have so influenced subsequent scholarship that they deserve to be summarized here. The presupposition both of his biography and of an earlier article is that Parker was a

transcendentalist; however, Commager, in emphasizing Parker's use of the rational understanding, leaves some doubt as to the degree and stability of his transcendentalism. In general, Commager considers that the Yankee Crusader "had gone over, stock and surplice, to transcendentalism," that he had become "the one spokesman of transcendentalism among the clergy."³ Yet, he suggests that Parker's rational interest in experience and study tended to compete with his transcendental reliance upon intuition.⁴ Three years earlier Commager had stated the issues of this tension in Parker's thought even more incisively in his article, "The Dilemma of Theodore Parker."⁵ "Parker was fascinated by knowledge," Commager contended, "for its own sake," and it was this fascination that "betrayed" his reliance upon intuition and placed him in a dilemma:

He maintained the complete and unique validity of facts of consciousness and proved them by facts of demonstration. He elaborated the absolute and submitted first principles to laboratory tests. Others noted this dualism, but it was so instinctive with Parker that he was never aware of it. He jumped to and fro between the deductive and the inductive, the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* with an acrobatic agility.

Again, however, Commager emphasized that this dualism does not negate Parker's transcendentalism: it "was not so much a personal idiosyncrasy as a social characteristic;" "it was the dilemma implicit in transcendentalism generally." "

Ten years and a world war followed Commager's work before Herbert W. Schneider initiated the current discussion of Parker's transcendentalism in his survey of the *History of American Philosophy*.⁷ Schneider accepts and develops those aspects of Commager's analysis that see Parker as a product of the Enlightenment, as chiefly a rationalist, but goes further than Commager in saying that Parker was a transcendentalist "only to a very limited degree." As he "seldom bases his arguments on transcendental truths," Schneider asserts, Parker's transcendentalism was "on the whole, more critical than romantic."⁸

Unfortunately the conclusions offered by Schneider are not documented in detail but are based upon only the briefest evidence. His contentions that Parker "kept the faith of the Enlightenment," knew "how to interpret the critical philosophy of Kant," and even "is distinguished from natural religion only in that he is still more extreme than the deists," do contribute an insight into the source of Parker's ideas but fail to constitute a comprehensive statement of them without detailed consideration of his use of intuition.⁹ Schneider's belated and brief acknowledgement that Parker's central ideas of "god, immortality, and right . . . have an *a priori* foundation" is prefaced by doubt as to whether this is really "intellectual intuition" since Parker's psychology of religion is so obscure.¹⁰ At any rate, Schneider

asserts, Parker relied less upon "the intuitions as evidence of particular, immediate truths."¹¹ Such an assertion is provoking but left without the benefit of further explanation.

Herbert Schneider's account of Parker occupies but a fraction of his space and attention, and necessarily relies upon the findings of others. In addition to his reference to Commager, there is reason to believe that Schneider's treatment of Parker rests to a large extent upon the findings of his student, John Edward Dirks. Although Dirks' dissertation was not accepted until a year after Schneider's book was published, the latter's acknowledgements and the similarities of the texts make it likely that his treatment of Parker's transcendentalism was closely related to Dirks' work.¹²

No such limitation as recognized for Schneider can be claimed for Dirks, however. In Dirks' *The Critical Theology of Theodore Parker* we have the only full-length scholarly work since Commager, and clearly the most important single work that has yet appeared on Parker's theology. Dirks also emphasizes Commager's analysis of Parker's rationalism, but is more extreme than Schneider in his thesis: "Parker stood near, but not within, New England transcendentalism."¹³ Whereas the book makes significant contributions to an understanding of Parker's theology, it is not a comprehensive treatment nor is it entirely uniform and clear in its point of view.

Dirks' description of Parker's theology as chiefly critical results in a number of important contributions. The introductory review of biographies and commentaries on Parker will be indispensable to future study, but is not the stronger for its intentness upon invalidating previous descriptions of Parker's transcendentalism.¹⁴ The book does contain, however, one of the best evaluations of Parker's biblical criticism to be found anywhere. Ranging from Parker's writing in the *Scriptural Interpreter* to his translation of DeWette, Dirks traces Parker's biblical criticism, his historical study of doctrine, compares him to other American critics, and concludes that Parker's

early contributions were not significant for their originality. Though he was respected for his radical conclusions, he was not welcomed as the expounder of new theories. He was, however, a great advocate and preacher of criticism, and the foremost American prophet of 'scientific' Biblical learning. His criticism was not cultivated merely for scholarly ends; he thought of it as a vital step in religious, as well as social, reform.¹⁵

The Critical Theology of Theodore Parker, as the title suggests, deals primarily with critical, rational aspects, rather than giving a comprehensive account of both understanding and intuition in Parker's theology.¹⁶ Indeed, as has already been indicated by his thesis, Dirks feels that Parker's reliance upon the understanding is so great that he relinquishes his claim to transcendentalism. In supporting this contention Dirks stresses Parker's

differences with Emerson as well as asserting the dominance of critical understanding over intuition, with the result that certain crucial aspects of Parker's theology are neglected.

Dirks accents the differences between Emerson and Parker, attempting thereby to demonstrate Parker's estrangement from New England transcendentalism.¹⁷ Implicit in such a comparison is the tendency to make Emerson the norm of transcendentalism, a tendency which, according to William R. Hutchison, "would exclude many in the New England movement," and about which Dirks himself seems to have some reservations.¹⁸ Nevertheless, he proceeds to suggest, for example, that the failure of the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* was due to the difference of interests between Parker and Emerson. Dirks quotes Emerson, "Though he [Parker] does not care for that which alone would interest me in a journal, the *spirit and interests* of my literary friends, yet he reckoned me as an available party." He concludes, "the basic difference between Emerson and Parker, according to this evidence, is that of divergent fundamental interests and tastes. Parker was headed in a direction quite different from Emerson."¹⁹ Now, clearly Parker and Emerson differed in their interests, but for Dirks to imply that their interests were so incompatible as completely to account for the failure of the *Review* is to form a generalization on one piece of direct evidence that excludes the possibility of other factors, such as a personality conflict.

The central argument of the book, however, is that Parker's theology is essentially critical and rational, and draws upon intuition in only a secondary way. Dirks refers to "the greater role assumed in his philosophy by the understanding and the study of human experience in history" and emphasizes that Parker's thought is a "critical system." As with Schneider, Dirks considers Parker's thought to have an "affinity with the fundamental teachings of the Enlightenment," and those who called him "deistical" were justified:

They had in mind his 'rational' test of truth and his use of facts of experience to validate facts of consciousness. They recognized his insistence that the basis of religion and of morality must be sought in human nature and that this basis must then be validated in human experience.²⁰

A result of Dirks' emphasis upon understanding is a serious slighting of Parker's ideas of God and immortality. The discussion of immortality is scarcely a page long and the evaluation of Parker's view of God is contained in five pages.²¹ These two crucial aspects of Parker's comprehensive theology are "a matter ultimately of belief" or intelligible only by "the dictates of natural reason" and are consequently not of sustained interest to Dirks.²²

Although this is the main line of Dirks' argument, his presentation is not entirely consistent; there is occasional variation and lack of clarity in his view point. Throughout his book Dirks is quietly at work modifying

his thesis. In the beginning his concern is to discover simply whether as a "preacher of a transcendentalist 'gospel'" Parker tried "*at the same time* to keep the more rationalistic faith of the Enlightenment." Later he is maneuvering to place Parker "*on the fringe*" of transcendentalism, and by the end of the book he has moved him to a position "*near, but not within*, New England transcendentalism."²³ Nor, is Dirks' initial care in distinguishing Parker's position as "so-called transcendentalism" consistently characteristic of the work.²⁴

Finally, Dirks' view of the relationship between reason and understanding is not always clear. Although at the foundation of transcendentalism there "were two related but diverging 'directives' of understanding and reason, Dirks suggests, popular New England transcendentalism came to repudiate "any system which subordinated reason to experience, the individual will to institutions, and the outer world to the inner." At times he seems to suggest that Parker differed from this popular change by continuing to accord "equal and complementary importance to 'facts of observation' and 'facts of consciousness.'"²⁵ Generally, however, as we have seen from his central thesis, Dirks feels Parker's chief difference with the main stream of transcendentalism is his emphasis upon understanding, with reason as but an "additional sanction." "Facts of experience" of "mankind in history" are seen as the means for "validation" of "facts of consciousness" or the "universals 'given' to man."²⁶ Even this view, however, is not consistent, for he says at other points that intuition in Parker is the "court of final appeal, the voice of ultimate sanction," which "legitimizes" "truths of the understanding."²⁷

The Critical Theology of Theodore Parker, then, is a work not completely uniform or comprehensive in its point of view, but one which gives some unparalleled insights into Parker's theology and which remains by far the most substantial scholarly treatment published since Commager.

Up to this point contemporary studies of Parker's transcendentalism had reached a similar conclusion, namely that his emphasis upon understanding was in conflict with, if not incompatible with, a primary reliance upon intuition. Not so with interpretations by George F. Newbrough, H. Shelton Smith, and William R. Hutchison.

A few months before Dirks' book appeared, George F. Newbrough published his article, "Reason and Understanding in the Works of Theodore Parker," mainly in response to Commager, as Newbrough's thesis testifies: "Parker's emphasis upon understanding is not — as charged by Commager, for instance — inconsistent with a primary reliance on intuition."²⁸ Newbrough's discussion of the relationship between reason, or intuition, and understanding is based upon a clear definition of terms including various synonyms in Parker's psychology of religion, a distinction of

Kant's reason from Parker's more authentic intuition,²⁹ a fuller treatment of God and immortality than is found in Dirks, and an adequate description of Parker's learning as a source of his understanding.

In a cohesive and convincing philosophical account, Newburgh elaborates the relationship between understanding and reason. Although "ideas" of reason are "logically anterior" to concepts of the understanding, in reality a function of the understanding is "to present concepts to reason." The reason, then, which has "immediate access to spiritual truth" is called upon for a "judgment," for a "final verdict."³⁰ It remains for understanding to "clarify" or "legitimate" the resulting intuitive truth. Newbrough summarizes the relationship as follows:

When we are told that the understanding must be educated in order to put the facts clearly to conscience and that conscience must be carefully cultivated in order to be capable of judging right, it is abundantly clear that we have a transcendentalism that makes full use of both reason and understanding.³¹

Newbrough's further assertion that reason is "primary" in Parker's thought is not documented but assumed.³² It is not the major burden of his article. He seems to feel that if he can show reason is compatible with understanding, it will follow that reason is primary. He thus begs one of the main questions asked by Schneider and Dirks, and becomes little less arbitrary than they in his answer.

Aside from this question, Newbrough's work is above reproach in demonstrating that reason and understanding are not necessarily "diverging" as Dirks feared,³³ but are mutually dependent. His account is well reasoned, closely documented, and on the whole one of the most helpful papers that has been written on Parker's thought.

Reacting directly to Dirks and Schneider, H. Shelton Smith's article, "Was Theodore Parker a Transcendentalist?" proposes "to determine whether or not Parker has been mistakenly numbered with the transcendentalists."³⁴ Smith's survey of the mid-nineteenth century Unitarian controversy provides a suitable setting for his discussion, but his review of Parker's life tends to exaggerate the significance of the latter's "decisive spiritual struggle" at Harvard.³⁵ Smith directs the bulk of his attention to an analysis of Parker's views on God, the moral law, and immortality, thus presenting one of the better accounts of the elements of his intuition, but thereby neglects the contributions of Parker's learning or understanding.

Although Smith addresses himself to the significant problems, both the standards for and conclusions of his article have little to contribute to the contemporary discussion of Parker's transcendentalism. The criteria he uses for identifying transcendentalism, particularly in Parker, are too general to be of value. The transcendentalists are discernible by little more than their acceptance "in varying degrees" of "the doctrine of the direct or

immediate perception of religious truth," while Parker is considered a transcendentalist rather than a rationalist simply because he denies that "all knowledge is limited to that of external sensory perception." Either Smith's conclusions are too conservative to be significant or too ambitious to describe what he has established. The conclusion that "traditional scholarship has not been essentially wrong in placing Parker within" transcendentalism misses the point raised by Dirks and Schneider.³⁶ They are less concerned with the correctness of traditional scholarship than with the question of whether contemporary scholarship with its unique perspective can better describe Parker's thought by not classifying him as a transcendentalist. On the other hand, Smith's conclusions that intuition is "ultimate," "final," and "normative," as with Newbrough's generalization about Parker's thought, imply a judgment of reason's role in relation to a conception of understanding Smith has hardly begun to investigate.³⁷

The article by H. Shelton Smith provides a well written introduction to the problem of Parker's transcendentalism and even presents a thorough discussion of Parker's central intuitions, but in regard to the main questions asked by contemporary scholarship it is inconclusive.

The culmination of the recent discussion of Parker's transcendentalism is found in William R. Hutchison's book, *The Transcendentalist Ministers*.³⁸ Hutchison's account of Parker's transcendentalism is designed as simply the groundwork for his treatment of the Transcendentalist Controversy, but he does perhaps the best job of drawing together the questions raised by Comager and Dirks and presenting a coherent, relevant answer. Recognizing that "however inconsistently" Parker's "theory of knowledge emphasized induction as well as intuition," Hutchison posits that Parker's use of intuition represented "the basis of his knowing process" or his "fundamental reliance in epistemology" upon which "the great truths of morality and religion . . . are perceived," while induction but "confirms and actualizes intuition" and "was far enough from a primary reliance" to be considered "auxiliary." Hutchison concludes that "Parker did not reject the transcendentalist belief in man's religious consciousness," but is not able in the brief space he gives the matter to support the point by a specific consideration of and contrast to the role of understanding.³⁹

In summary of this first area of specialization it can be observed that whether Parker was a transcendentalist or not is really a secondary question; what is important is how well the issue of transcendentalism illuminates the nature of his theology. Where only moderate attention has been paid to his transcendentalism, as in the case of Newbrough, for instance, Parker's theology is allowed to speak for itself and is most fairly represented. Where this has been a preoccupation with his transcendentalism, as in the case of Dirks and Smith, the presentation of Parker's theology tends to be structured

to serve the point of view expressed. In this second case, despite Dirks' disclaimer,⁴⁰ the question of Parker's transcendentalism tends to become an academic one and leads to oversimplified, one-sided impressions of his theology.

Newbrough, Smith, and Hutchison in asserting that in theory Parker gave reason a primary role are no less correct than are Dirks and Schneider in pointing out that in practice the understanding was often more important. It is clear, particularly from what Newbrough has indicated, that Parker represents both of these tendencies. Perhaps an alternate hypothesis is that neither is primary but that they are in a relationship of mutual dependence. As Donald Lothrop has commented, "the idea and the fact are two aspects of the same thing. There is a dialectical relationship between them. One acts and reacts upon the other."⁴¹

At any rate, future attempts to settle the question of primacy on the basis of Parker's theological works should explicitly establish the criteria to be used and at least present a full comparison of both reason and understanding. Hopefully future scholarship will not be limited to what Parker said in formal statements, but will take into consideration what he did and was as recorded in his life of social decisions and as poured almost unconsciously into his journals and prayers.

B. *Social Reform*: William H. Riback's article, "Theodore Parker of Boston: Social Reformer (1840-1860)," has been the principle work written recently with the purpose of discussing "the impact of Theodore Parker on the social services of Boston, of Massachusetts, [and] of the United States."⁴² Although, or perhaps because, the article stresses the fact that Parker's social reform was carried on largely behind the scenes, Riback is seldom able to penetrate beyond Parker's views to present the extent and effect of his reform activities.

The article's most valuable contribution is its emphasis that Parker's controversial reputation made it necessary for him publicly to disassociate himself from reforms and work, instead, "in the background, operating through church committees, 'front' organizations, friends, and disciples who shared his views."⁴³ Specifically, he supported such groups as the "Council of Conservative Reformers," his own church's "Committee of Benevolent Action," and the "Boston Provident Association," which he was instrumental in organizing. It is furthermore significant, Riback observes, that Parker as a clergyman was accepted in reform circles:

. . . he proved his worth to the lay reformers of the city and was admitted into their company, the only clergyman in all Boston who could associate on equal terms with Garrison and Mann, Phillips and Howe, John Augustus, Robert Rantoul, Dorothea Dix, John Allen, Tuckerman and Follen.⁴⁴

Riback enumerates a number of reforms in which Parker was interested and with respect to some presents his views, but seldom shows the

extent and effect of his concern. A good many reforms are mentioned such as woman suffrage, poverty, temperance, and education, but only the problems of housing, penal reform, and delinquent girls are given detailed attention. The consequences of Parker's actions "through a friend . . . and with the assistance of his 'Benevolent Committee' of the church" to ease the congestion in tenement houses are not indicated. When citing Parker's interest in the penal reforms a "good man" was advocating, Riback can only say, "One wonders . . . whether Parker had a hand in the suggestions." Parker's concern for delinquent girls is an exception both in that "Parker operated in the foreground and in public view rather than through intermediaries" and in that Riback indicates he worked actively with Edward Beecher to establish "a home to care for [the delinquent girls] . . . after discharge from prison; a trade taught in prison; foster-home placement whenever possible."⁴⁵ Within this last section Riback gives an excellent account of Parker's relationship with the New York reformer, Charles Loring Brace.

Riback's evaluation of Parker's "general social outlook" reflects some dissatisfaction with Parker's short-ranged reforms and suggests but does not document a relationship between Parker and Marx. The author's statement, "one might expect a certain readiness for doctrines calling for total reorganization of society rather than the piecemeal amelioratives which [Parker] . . . attempted to administer," reflects a lack of appreciation for Parker's sense of involvement and commitment to society as it existed. Riback remarks that perhaps Parker's social outlook was "tinged with some ideas gleaned from Marx," but offers no connection between them other than that Marx was "then contributing to the *New York Tribune*, to which Parker also contributed." When he asserts that, "Marx's 'proletariat' became Parker's 'Perishing Classes,'" and that "Parker paraphrases Marx's theory of labor value," Riback can cite no evidence but can only grasp at the most general similarities.⁴⁶

The understanding of Parker as a reformer is enriched by Riback's interpretation of his oblique methods and his relationship to Charles Loring Brace, but is not enlarged significantly by his asserted relationship to Marx or by the review of reform interests which omits consideration of Parker's activity and effect. To be sure Parker did not publicize many of his reforms, but the extent and influence of his activity are revealed, if anywhere, in private records such as letters and journals, which Riback has not consulted fully.⁴⁷

Daniel Aaron's book, *Men of Good Hope*, includes a section on Parker's reforms for an industrial economy.⁴⁸ "Parker is the link between Emerson and the postwar reformers," says Aaron, "He is among the first of the middle-class radicals to recognize and to protest against the signs of the coming business age."

Observing the early tendencies of an industrial economy, Aaron suggests, Parker quickly became a critic of capital and management, the defender and champion of labor. Parker's principle was simple: "deification of property" was "irrational and unchristian;" "the business of a man was not to amass property but to live." Thus, "the acquisitive elements" or business "became the object of his fiercest diatribes." Aaron asserts that Parker, aware that "business owned and controlled all channels of opinion-making," was among the first "observers of competitive capitalism who noticed how the assumptions of business became national assumptions."⁴⁹

Therefore, "he assigned himself the role of spokesman for the repressed producers and summed up the case against the business classes." Machinery, far from helping the working classes, brought about a "new tyranny," and "increased the savageness and extensiveness of human exploitation." As a result, Aaron claims, Parker observed "a diminution of freedom of thought and manly independence," and "the laboring man had lost his sense of personal identity." Further consequences were "a class of unemployables kept in a state of helpless degradation," the increased use of "an antiquated and barbaric system of penology," poverty, and slums. Although Aaron asserts that Parker "consecrated his talents to combatting those ideas and practices that postponed the arrival of industrial democracy," he does not specify Parker's practices but only his views on the abuse of management and the plight of labor; the categories of poverty, housing, and penal codes are not even discussed but simply introduced.⁵⁰

Aaron's brief account, then, presents a significant interpretation of Parker's ideas on industrial reform, but does not speak of their influence. Whether Aaron's representation is entirely true to Parker is uncertain since he does not document his statements in detail and since many of his interpretations seem more akin to his theme of "progressivism" than to insights commonly attributed to Parker.⁵¹

Towards the end of his paper on "The Political Ideas of Theodore Parker," Arthur I. Ladu turns briefly to consider a number of Parker's reform interests such as woman suffrage, temperance, public education and libraries, which are asserted to have a "political bearing."⁵² In addition, Ladu stresses the most important area of Parker's reform, his anti-slavery efforts: "Parker appears to have been the only transcendentalist who ranged himself definitely with these anti-slavery men."

Ladu's discussion of the anti-slavery reform is valuable for its treatment of the sanction of the "higher law" and of Parker's attitude toward the means of violence. "Parker's transcendental politics, applied to slavery, particularly the Fugitive Slave Law," says Ladu, "gave rise to his conception of the 'higher law,'" which refers to the priority of conscience over the laws of the nation. His methods of implementing the "higher law"

varied: "He was not steadily a non-resistant abolitionist after the manner of Garrison," and although "at times he deplored violence and personal animosities in the abolition struggle; at another time he aided in sending Sharpe rifles to the free-soilers in Kansas."⁵³

John Haynes Holmes' article, "The Education of Theodore Parker," which was an address to the alumni of the Harvard Divinity School, traces the course of Parker's academic education largely to show the contrast to his dominant education as a reformer, which was and remained a deficiency of the Divinity School.⁵⁴ The record of courses and study at Harvard is reviewed; Parker's relationships with Dr. Francis who "exerted a decisive influence over Parker," and with Henry Ware, Jr. who "was the nearest to Parker's life," are made clear.⁵⁵ Parker's reading is found by Holmes to have been "extensive rather than profound." "What one misses in all this mass of reading," says Holmes, "is order and aim. There are no paths through this jungle." Yet Parker is declared "the most learned man of his generation in America."⁵⁶

Despite such a scholarly inclination, Holmes continues, reform activities became the dominant concern in Parker's life, as illustrated by the indefinite postponement of his projected history of religion:

To his dying day he dreamed of capturing the leisure to compose this masterpiece of learning. But he never got further than the writing of his fugitive essays in the *Dial*, and the gathering of books, and ever more books, in preparation for the great achievement. . . . It is perhaps the supreme personal tragedy of Parker's life that some demon of dedication within him, some crying sense of agony in the face of the want and woe of men in society, drove him, as by a scourge, away from the native indulgence of his private genius to the tumult and terror of his public days. Had Parker had his way, he would have sat among his books and woven his spell of learning. But the times seized him, and made him their driven slave.

Yet Parker failed to receive training for his role as a reformer in the Divinity School, "a cloister which rarely heard the reverberations of the social conflicts which raged without its walls."⁵⁷ "The Divinity School was not," Holmes continues, "in the business of preparing men for prophecy . . . Its task was to deal with the scholarship of its field — to make its students learned in the theology and history of Christendom." Such study, Holmes asserts, was "of little use later on in the actual business of religion." What was and is needed are courses in "economics, politics, and sociology" as well as the Bible, in the "psychology of sex and marriage quite as much as that of faith and doctrine."⁵⁸

John Haynes Holmes, who is himself a respected social reformer of this century, speaks with unusual sympathy and insight. Although his style, spotted with rhetorical questions, is largely oral, it is accomplished. His critique of ministerial education is particularly telling, and one wonders at its continued relevance.

Although individually few of the studies on Parker's social reform are impressive, taken as a whole they are surprisingly comprehensive. Holmes has considered Parker's preparation for reform in contrast to his scholarly interests; Riback has indicated Parker's relationship to Charles Loring Brace, while Charles H. Lyttle has suggested something of his relation to Horace Mann.⁵⁹ The areas covered have included housing, penal reform, and delinquent girls by William Riback; industry and labor by Daniel Aaron; woman suffrage, temperance, education, and anti-slavery by Arthur Ladu. There has, however, been a tendency for these writers to be concerned with Parker's views on the reforms rather than the results and effects of these views.⁶⁰

C. *Political Ideas*: The greater part of Ladu's article, as already indicated, deals with Parker's political ideas. Ladu's grounding in political science and his working knowledge of Parker provide perhaps the best treatment of his political theory and his views on specific issues, but exclude the question of his influence upon statesmen of the time.

Ladu's familiarity with Parker is reflected in his insistence that Parker's "political theory was not something apart from or in addition to" but "a product of his transcendentalist philosophy." It follows that for Parker "human government, institutions, and laws should be formulated in accordance with the dictates of human conscience." By definition a theory thus deduced would be opposed to the sensationalist theory, which "knows nothing of ideas, only of facts," relying "fundamentally on the supremacy of power."⁶¹

Parker's opposition to the "sensationalist school" provides Ladu with the basis of Parker's relation to the two parties of the day, but first Ladu digresses in a preliminary description of the Democrats and the Whigs which occupies more than four pages with hardly a reference to Parker. Ladu concludes, "there was little difference between the political doctrines of the two major parties," rather it was a distinction of class, a "feeling of antagonism between the masses and the more privileged class which chiefly separated the Democrats from the Whigs." The two parties representing antithetical classes, then, were locked in a power struggle, and Parker was bent upon "exposing the deficiencies of what he called the sensationalist school in politics" in both Democrats and Whigs. Distrusting the anarchy of frontier democracy, yet hating the tyranny of privileged classes, Parker's relation to the Democrats and Whigs is brilliantly summarized:

All people might rise to excellence, and it was the duty of the wise and good to help them do so; therein was Parker democratic. But not all men were actually good or able, and therefore under actual conditions the majority ought not to rule with absolute sway; therein Parker was of the Whigs. However, the quality which made a man excellent was not his being a man, as the Dem-

ocrats thought, or his possessing property, as the Whigs thought. Instead, it was the demonstration of a cultured and Christian character; and in that belief, Parker was neither Whig nor Democrat, but transcendentalist.⁶²

After thus presenting Parker's political theory and his relation to the parties, Ladu proceeds to consider his position on specific issues, some of which have already been mentioned because of their implications as social reforms, but which also include such explicit matters as states' rights, war, and "Manifest Destiny." According to Ladu, Parker's "changes of opinion with regard to the nature of the Union . . . were caused almost entirely by his opinion of slavery," and his attitude toward war was "governed by his opinion as to whether it was necessary to achieve the highest measure of human freedom and justice." Thus, "he denounced the Mexican War," but didn't seem to reject the value of war for the "abolition of slavery." Parker's views on "Manifest Destiny" receive the fullest attention from Ladu, who finds Parker "fundamentally out of sympathy with the program of nationalistic expansion as it took shape in his era," "particularly when its accomplishment promised to require armed conflict."⁶³

Ladu's study is singular for its insight into the sources and manifestations of Parker's political ideas. Through his descriptions of the Whigs and Democrats of the period he is able to indicate Parker's theoretical relationship to these parties, but he omits consideration of the practical impact of Parker's views on the politics of the time.

Daniel Aaron's book contains a treatment of Parker's political ideas which, because of its insight into the limitations of Parker's political outlook, and its interpretation of his ideas on government and democracy, cannot be overlooked.

Parker's transcendentalism, according to Aaron, required him "to support political theories that placed human rights above material rights and to judge all institutions by their value to man,"⁶⁴ yet he carried with him a kind of "parochialism" or "regional complacency" that gave him an "exaggerated notion about the nature of his own section and a deep scorn for parties, native or alien, that offended his political code."⁶⁵ Thus he was "dissatisfied with the leadership of both major parties:" "The Daniel Websters and even the Abraham Lincolns who held back or compromised enraged him." As Aaron points out, however, Parker's imperfections were but anticipations of his strengths:

He could be strikingly wrong on occasion — impatient, pig-headed and indiscriminating — but enough has been said of his unmistakable limitations. Our task is to reconcile the provincial, myopic, and sometimes querulous martyr with the transcendental and democratic Parker who overshadowed the first and belied his own prejudices, who championed unpopular causes with impressive energy, and who put aside his theological speculations when the times called for a stump orator.⁶⁶

Aaron then discusses Parker's views on government and democracy. He stresses the imminently practical interest of Parker in government, not as divinely instituted, but as an agency that "has no right to enact wrong."⁶⁷ "He neither feared nor worshipped" it, says Aaron; it was simply a "social instrument; its effectiveness depended upon the intelligence and virtue of its users." Democracy, it follows, is "the only form of government prepared to guarantee these rights [of the individual] with a minimum of personal restraint."⁶⁸ With the observation that Parker's concept of "industrial democracy . . . is probably his most interesting contribution to American political thought," Aaron concludes his critical and suggestive discussion of Parker's political ideas.⁶⁹

The accounts of Ladu and Aaron, then, present adequate statements of Parker's political ideas, but avoid the question of the effect of those views. Aaron does suggest that Parker was in touch with such political leaders as Horace Greeley, Charles Sumner, William Seward, Salmon P. Chase, George Bancroft, and William Herndon, but fails to indicate the result of the contact. Fred G. Bratton is quick to assert, however, that Parker became "adviser to Sumner, Wilson, Chase, and Seward. His correspondence with the leading statesmen of the time, as shown in the Weiss collection of letters, is ample evidence of his political influence."⁷⁰ Unfortunately, contact and even sustained correspondence do not assure significant influence.⁷¹ The need remains closely to document Parker's relationship to the statesmen of his time and the nature and extent of his influence upon them.

D. *Public Speaking*: Roy Clyde McCall's chapter in *The History and Criticism of American Public Address*, a condensation of the earlier dissertation already quoted, sees Parker as a product of classical rhetoric, thereby applying the traditional Aristotelian scheme of analysis and the appropriate technical terms.⁷² In accordance with his intention "to allow the reader to see . . . Parker's conscious application of [classical] principles," McCall demonstrates his reliance upon the theory found in the English State Trials, Campbell, Whately, and upon the example of Gorgias, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Quintilian.⁷³

The practice of Parker's public speaking is discussed in terms of the principle Aristotelian canons.⁷⁴ Within the category of invention, McCall analyzes Parker as "to be declared intellectually great, morally stable, emotionally intense," and his preparation thorough, although the "actual writing he apparently did rapidly and without delay of interruption when opportunity allowed." Further elements of Parker's invention are considered as logical proof, including inductive and deductive devices, pathetic proof which drew heavily upon pride in New England and hatred for the South, and "of the three Aristotelian obligations of ethical proof . . . , good sense and good will." The second category, arrangement, includes Parker's use of

exordium, thesis, "thus conforming to the first Aristotelian requirement," partition, topic sentences, transitions, summary, and peroration. Third, Parker's concrete style is characterized by its oral quality, illustrations, metaphors, and comparisons. And fourth, his delivery is found not to be oratorical but predominantly natural and conversational. To the texts of his speeches, which often make dry reading, Parker added "something more that is purely an aspect of delivery." As McCall concludes, "somewhere within this freedom from ostentation or artificiality was a quality or power of personality that reached out to take its hold upon the audience."⁷⁵

If McCall's statements seem over-confident, it is perhaps because he is even more familiar with Parker's journals, letters, and newspaper reports than was Commager;⁷⁶ if he seems reluctant to improve upon the Aristotelian pattern of analysis, it is because Parker's rhetoric was essentially classical;⁷⁷ if the style of the chapter is abrupt, it is because it is published without the benefit of original notes; and if the terms are technical and do not invite popular reading, it is because the work is addressed to a professional group as the definitive treatment of Parker's public address.

Equally intense but decidedly more limited in scope is David Mead's article, "Theodore Parker in Ohio," analyzing Parker's lyceum activity in the Middle West.⁷⁸ Mead retraces Parker's lyceum tours primarily in Ohio during 1852, 1854, 1855-1856, mentioning not only lectures but sermons. To review these occasions Mead has carefully canvassed Ohio newspapers of the day and drawn upon Parker manuscripts, including the Lyceum Diary. Parker's ruling motivation for these lectures is seen as education rather than profit or agitation. As Mead says, "Parker was more concerned with popular education than with financial profits for himself," and people "were often surprised by the calm, intellectual quality of his lectures." His newspaper reviews were accordingly favorable, speaking of his lectures as "not boisterous," but abounding with "lofty and noble ideas," and of Parker as a "model lecturer." Thus, the newspaper accounts uncovered by Mead tend to confirm McCall's conclusions about Parker's delivery: although "a plain and quite man . . . and barely raising his voice above the conversational pitch," Parker "enchained his audience." In his concluding statement Mead captures the secret of Parker's success in the Middle West:

Except where political issues were involved, Parker and the other 'eccentric but brilliant' orators from the East were likely to meet with less adverse criticism in the West than they were accustomed to receive in New England. The pioneers' long struggle against the hardships of the frontier had given the Western mind an independent spirit and a curiosity to hear all sides of a question. The distinction between moral right and wrong was not so clearly marked to Westerners as it was to New Englanders. There were doubtless many Ohio people who were prepared to find offense in Parker's opinions,

but the newspaper reviews of the day suggest that among his hearers was a goodly number of independent Western citizens who were inclined to agree that 'Mr. Parker speaks, as he believes, the whole truth caring little where it hits. His fearlessness is grand. He stands up before earth and heaven a true man.' 79

McCall's work, then, proves comprehensive, with the exception of Parker's prayers and conversation.⁸⁰ David Mead's concentration on Parker's lecturing provides a valuable supplementary study. Indeed, there is room for a comparable study of Parker's preaching from the standpoint of homiletics.

E. *Literary Theory and Criticism*: Russel B. Nye's article, "The Literary Theory of Theodore Parker," is the basic work on Parker's theory and criticism of literature.⁸¹ Nye uncritically reconstructs Parker's theory of literature and criticism, reserving his evaluation for Parker's actual criticism and avoiding altogether the question of Parker's literary practice.

Parker's theory of literature, according to Nye, was based upon his transcendentalism and his concept of the scholar. Literature, which includes history, philosophy, and criticism, was the record of the progress of the great "primal intuitions" through "the gradual development of man's faculties," the "manifestation of that inwardly discovered truth that freed and elevated mankind." Literature, therefore, is "a balanced combination of two elements, the universal and the particular — 'one is of mankind in general; that is human and universal. The other is of the tribe in special, and of the writer in particular.'" ⁸² As for the writer or scholar he must both have "intuitive knowledge of higher truths, and communicate . . . them to the people." "Never must the scholar lose touch with the people," Nye emphasizes, "or cut himself off from the roots of society." ⁸³

The theory of Parker's literary criticism, continues Nye, "stemmed naturally from his concept of art and the artist," and is related in practice to his concept of the historian. It is the qualities of the scholar and of the artist that characterize the critic, who must necessarily be "didactic." "The artist, in Parker's estimation," says Nye, "was simply a scholar who chose to discharge his social duty, either by choice or qualification, in the field of art," and who, in addition to the scholar's responsibility of communication, has the aesthetic obligation to leave the work "clothed and adorned with language." The theory of Parker's literary criticism is related to his conception of the historian only in that his criticism was often of histories. For Parker, "the writer of history was no mere impersonal, objective annalist or narrator, but a . . . biographer, giving the reader the inner as well as the outer life of a nation." ⁸⁴ "Not solely by deduction from an assumed hypothesis, but by induction from almost innumerable facts," the historian must discover "the great social law which is the basis for scientific history." These "requirements which Parker set down for the historian . . . repre-

sent . . . the criteria by which he passed judgment upon Prescott, Buckle, Hildreth, and Macaulay.”⁸⁵

The practice of Parker’s literary criticism was not, however, confined to histories, but included other literature chiefly of Germany and America. Parker held German literature to be “the fairest, the richest, the most original, fresh, and religious literature of all modern times,” and Nye observes that his reviews of it “were marked by energetic enthusiasm.” With American literature “Parker was less charitable, but firmly optimistic.”⁸⁶ He felt it was “neither sufficiently original, noble, nor national,” but had escaped the disadvantages of a “patrician class” and “government interference.” Although “Emerson exhibited certain weaknesses,” he is “the only American author mentioned by name in Parker’s critical writings, except for historians,” and the writer for whom Parker “reserved almost his sole critical praise.”⁸⁷

Russel Nye’s evaluation of Parker’s literary criticism recognizes its surprising quantity, the thoroughness and energy with which he prepared, and certain inconsistencies in his reviews. “His work in literary criticism was not voluminous,” says Nye, but “in the light of an extraordinarily busy life was amazing.” “Few prepared more carefully” than Parker, and his “energetic scholarship” “represented wide reading and a great deal of careful and constructive thought on the part of the critic.”⁸⁸ In his criticism of Emerson’s extreme “reliance on the intuitive method in literature,” however, and in “reproaching Menzel for applying political and moral standards to German literature,” Nye observes, Parker reveals “certain inconsistencies that show that his critical principles were never clearly formulated, or at all events, not consistently applied.”⁸⁹

Nye’s account of Parker’s literary theory is smoothly written and splendidly organized. His synthesis of Parker’s literary ideas, his summary of the critical reviews, and even his suggestion of inconsistency in Parker’s critical practice are irreplaceable contributions. Nevertheless more detailed reactions to Parker’s literary criticism, an evaluation of his theory of literature or criticism, and an ampler treatment of his literary practice would have been welcomed.

Stanley M. Vogel in his book, *German Literary Influences on the American Transcendentalists*, and Henry A. Pochmann, whose *German Culture in America* has already been referred to, present well documented considerations of Parker’s criticism of German literature.⁹⁰ Vogel feels that Parker’s transcendental presuppositions and his incomparable learning in German literature, reflected in his unsparing preparation for reviews, resulted in unique and exacting criticisms of German writers.

Though Parker “based his conclusions upon more tangible evidence than mere intuition,” Vogel claims, we do have “the right to consider [him] . . . as an influential factor in the Transcendental group.” In the case of

his severe criticism of Menzel, for instance, Parker applied his transcendental views and "accused Menzel of a false standard of measuring literature. Instead of judging literature by its own laws, he passed sentence on the political complexion of the author."⁹¹

"He was without any doubt the most learned in German literature and philosophy," Vogel concludes, "Even if he did not know the language so well as Hedge." "In 1840 when Emerson was looking for a suitable scholar to defend German literature in the *Dial*, he turned at once to Parker." The resulting article is pronounced by Vogel as "one of the most memorable, most learned, and yet wittiest discussions in the periodical, [and] had a decided effect on contemporary scholars." Parker's preparation for reviews of Strauss and Goethe, for example, illustrate his scholarship. In preparing a review of Strauss' *Das Leben Jesu*, "Parker read not only the original text of 1600 pages, but all the arguments pro and con and all the defenses and attacks which had appeared in England, Germany, and America." He prepared for his study of Goethe "by reading the whole edition of Goethe's writings, including supplementary volumes, then the correspondence with Jacobi and Nicolai, and finally the biographies of Goethe by Döring, Schafer, and others."⁹²

The confluence in Parker of transcendentalist criteria and uncompromising scholarship issued in a unique and exacting criticism of German writers. Parker thought Goethe to be "less earnest, less humane, less intellectual, and with less large influence" than Voltaire; "liked Schiller even less than Goethe," condemning "the oratorical pedantry of Schiller's poetry;" and "proceeded to flagellate Menzel's views of Goethe in particular." He respected the poet, Heine, thus differing "sharply from most of his contemporaries," and was "one of the few" who understood Kant.⁹³

Pochmann, more concerned with the philosophical influence of German writers on Parker, presents a less detailed account of Parker's criticism of German literature. Indeed, Pochmann goes so far as to say, "All in all . . . the poets and romancers of Germany meant little compared with the significance to him of the philosophers and theologians." Nevertheless, he feels that literature was significant enough for Parker to comment on the "sharpness and clarity of his judgments" "as a critic:" "his judgments were independent and penetrating, his study of each work thorough and complete." Although Pochmann sees Strauss as the "major" influence upon Parker, he observes that Parker's review of *Das Leben Jesu* "is disappointing. Its point of view is confused, and the conclusions are equivocal." Parker's review of Menzel's *German Literature* is termed "a similarly overwhelming exhibition of erudition;" "he found Goethe not commendable in all points;" he "heartily disliked" Schiller's poetry; and although "Heine attracted his attention . . . , he did not relish all of [him] . . ."⁹⁴

The interpretations by Vogel and Pochmann represent two of the most competent specializations in recent scholarship, and in terms of Parker's criticism of German literature may be considered exhaustive. Russel Nye's work provides the wider view of Parker's theory of literature and criticism. Nowhere, however, can one find an attempt to evaluate Parker's own literary efforts, such as they were, particularly his poetry and epistles.⁹⁵

F. *Personality*: The final area of specialization which contemporary scholarship has probed may be defined as the dynamics of Parker's personality, particularly in reaction against the conservative elements of society. The most important recent interpretation of Parker's personality is found in William R. Hutchison's discussion of "Theodore Parker and the Confessional Question" in *The Transcendentalist Ministers*. Working from the assumptions of the Christian Church, Hutchison selects and interprets his material in a way that produces an unsympathetic appraisal of Parker in relation to the conservative Unitarians.⁹⁶

Hutchison's frame of reference and norm for evaluating Parker's denominational activity center on how he "reflected and furthered the aims of Protestant liberalism." Too long, Hutchison contends, "assessments of the Controversy" have been based on the presuppositions of the transcendentalists; "as a result, the regular Unitarians of this period have had an extremely bad press, and we have taken the word of their opponents that they deserved nothing better." In *The Transcendentalist Ministers*, however, "the main purpose" is "to find out what the members of the Concord group [including Parker] did and said as Christian ministers."⁹⁷

Throughout Hutchison's analysis there is a tendency to select materials by editing passages to be quoted, by minimizing favorable testimony, and by omitting certain facts which makes Parker's position seem inappropriate. Parker's respectful and rather skilful debut in the "Levi Blodgett Letter" is not emphasized, passages from his "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity" are selected in a way that makes the tone of the entire sermon appear sarcastic,⁹⁸ and the one reference to the *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion* is Parker's use of Alexander Pope's poem.⁹⁹ The substance of Hutchison's chapter is occupied by the decidedly conservative opinions of Samuel K. Lothrop, Ezra Stiles Gannett, Samuel Osgood, A. P. Peabody, John H. Morison, and Orville Dewey, which are permitted to represent Parker, while articles in his defense by William Ware and William H. Furness are summarized in a scant half page.¹⁰⁰ Parker's "intense and constant feeling" of "persecution," Hutchison insists, was without justification, although the obvious contributing factor, his extreme social ostracism, is not once acknowledged.¹⁰¹ Instead, Hutchison implies from quoting conservative Unitarians that "personal and scholarly association" through "free and friendly conversation" did not cease.¹⁰²

Furthermore, the material considered by Hutchison is interpreted in a way that casts Parker in an unfavorable light. He speaks of Parker as a "zealot" when discussing his transcendentalism; he characterizes the South Boston Sermon as "invective" and represents its opinion of Christianity as "vulgar and absurd" (although he acknowledges its positive elements);¹⁰³ Parker's reply to the *Register's* criticism of the sermon as "sneer and ridicule" he terms as "angry;"¹⁰⁴ and he paraphrases the subsequent review by the *Monthly Miscellany* to suggest that Parker "apparently" considered the *Register's* review an act of injustice to him.¹⁰⁵ Hutchison declares Parker's "strictures" of the Hollis Street Council "as severe as they could have been had the Council decided unfavorably to Pierpont;"¹⁰⁶ he dismisses Parker's letters to the Boston Association of Ministers in 1845 and to the American Unitarian Association in 1835 as "more than a little disingenuous" and "chiefly rhetorical," since their "queries had long since been answered;"¹⁰⁷ and he interprets the *Examiner's* review of the collected sermons on *Theism, Athiesm, and the Popular Theology* as "a three page sigh of weariness — an oblique and somewhat caustic admission that further argument with this man would be futile."¹⁰⁸ About the only instance in the controversy which was not "provoked by intolerance or insult on the part of Parker," Hutchison concludes, was his letter to the Unitarian Association where "the immediate provocation came from the conservative side" through the Association's "Declaration of Opinion."¹⁰⁹

Hutchison's general emphasis is upon the shortcomings of Parker's personality, such as his insensitivity to others and his undue sensitivity to their criticism. Parker's insensitivity toward others is manifest in his name calling — "bigot, superstitious, fanatic, pharisee, and hypocrite," his "genuine inability to believe that his attitudes could cause pain or indignation to others," and his "inability to understand how opinions opposite his own could be held strongly and sincerely." His sensitivity to attacks on his own position resulted in undue "tenderness and hurt feelings," as well as an inappropriate sense of "persecution."¹¹⁰

On the other hand, Hutchison if not approving of the conservative Unitarians, is certainly not disapproving. He feels that there was "hardly an instance of so-called conservative intolerance" which was not provoked by Parker, and that when it did occur it was warranted. Thus he says that there was little reason for complaints of persecution since the names "of which Parker was complaining" were no more "unpleasant" or "unjust" than the names he used; the conservatives, he declares, "acted on the whole with a fairness and restraint at least equal to that of their antagonist." At the most it could be said of the conservatives that they were "forced to adopt measures which bore a painful resemblance to Orthodox measures of thirty years before," but ultimately there was little alternative to exclud-

ing Parker because he represented a foreign and "pernicious" element in the "organic integrity of the church," and, as Hedge later observed, "a movement is strong by what it includes, an organism by what it excludes."¹¹¹

Hutchison's interpretation of Parker represents one of the best documented accounts of the Transcendentalist Controversy, and clearly a much-needed expression of the conservative Unitarian viewpoint.¹¹² It is most welcome, and the fact that so much space has been devoted here to its evaluation reflects its importance. Hutchison's central contribution is indicating the value of transcendentalism for the Unitarian church, specifically Parker's significance in the conflict between the issues of Christian confessionalism and free inquiry:

Though Unitarianism after the 1850's was still beset by the conflicting demands of free inquiry and Christian confessionalism, that church has never, since the Parker experience, suffered from its early delusion that the two can exist together as absolute principles.

Hutchison brings into bold relief what many of Parker's partisans have been reluctant to acknowledge, that his paradoxical personality had room for weakness as well as strength, particularly in his insensitivity to the feelings and attitudes of others and in his tendency toward self-pity. Hutchison is not ready to acknowledge Parker's strengths, however, nor is he prepared to let his interpretation stand on a thorough study of Parker's personality. Intent upon compensating for the past shortcoming of reporting Unitarian conservatives "second hand, if at all," Hutchison ironically is content to rely upon second hand reports of Parker by conservatives, and his interpretation is to be trusted no more fully than past efforts by extreme partisans.¹¹³ Just as Hutchison says of Parker, "it should be possible to acknowledge the reformer's contributions without adopting his rather distorted view of the opposition," so too it should be possible for us to acknowledge Hutchison's contributions without accepting completely his rather distorted view of Parker.¹¹⁴

Daniel Aaron's brief treatment of Parker's personality tends to keep a clearer perspective and to be more balanced in its view. True, Aaron is quick to recognize that Parker possessed "some of the defects of the reformist temper" apparent in the "sarcasm and the bitterness and harshness of his denunciations," but such fierceness, Aaron concedes, "came naturally to one who was 'wroth with wrong.'" ¹¹⁵ Indeed, his "devastating candor" was one of the reasons he became "the most popular preacher of his day." "Parker liked to think of himself as a frustrated bard" and "one is occasionally annoyed by his air of martyrdom," a "note of self-pity;" these were due, however, to "the copious abuse he received [which] warped him a little, [and] made him unduly sensitive to criticism." Aaron's comment on Parker's New England ethos illustrates the former's perceptiveness:

He belonged to a homogeneous community still relatively unmarred by class lines, a community welded together by common beliefs, still independent, confident, self-contained. His family was poor, to be sure, but at the same time respected and able to give him a name and a position in New England society that outsiders could obtain only with difficulty. The great influence he later exercised over his countrymen, especially in New England, lay in his power to draw upon the moral presuppositions of a people he understood and who in turn understood him. . . . and if he drew the anger of his conservative contemporaries, they stoned him with the particular kind of vehemence a people reserves for its own prophets.¹¹⁶

Because of Hutchison's interpretation this final area of specialization has been one in which Parker has been dealt with as critically as any other. Aaron's account, however, tends to mediate the severity of Hutchison and stabilizes our impression. Both works give an increased appreciation of Parker's limitations as a person, and the tendency cannot be begrudged which removes Parker from the realm of idealistic admiration and brings him again to the world of men where his virtues are tempered with his weaknesses.

III. BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES

Although the dominant trend of recent interpretations has been toward specialization, there have inevitably appeared a number of studies, for the most part biographical, which attempt to present a general, integrated picture of Theodore Parker. None of these works have rivalled Commager's; most have been brief and only in a few instances guided by a principle of description that offers original insights into Parker.¹¹⁷

Daniel Aaron considers Parker in the group of American "progressives" that included Emerson, Henry George, Thorstein Veblen, Theodore Roosevelt, and Brooks Adams, all of whom were characterized by "their unwillingness to detach themselves from those elements in society they wished to reform."¹¹⁸ This well-written study contributes insights significant enough to have been considered already under specialized categories of Parker's social reform, political ideas, and personality.

Henry Pochmann's interpretation of Parker as a product of German thought and literature has already been mentioned in regard to transcendentalism and literary criticism. Pochmann reviews Parker's life, indicating his familiarity with the German language, retracing his travels in Germany, emphasizing his personal acquaintance with Germans, and demonstrating the German influence upon his scholarship.¹¹⁹ He concurs with Vogel in suggesting that Parker's speaking knowledge of German "was unequal to the establishment of unimpeded intercourse with the German savants," yet recognizes that he drew heavily from their written works. The translation of DeWette is termed by Pochmann as "Parker's offering on the altar of

scholarship — an imposing, accurate, clearly organized, and shrewd digest of all that the world had accumulated on the subject of the Old Testament Canon.”¹²⁰ Likewise Pochmann notes the influence of German thought on the “Levi Blodgett Letter,” the South Boston Sermon, and the *Discourse of Religion*, the last of which “could hardly have been written without the aid of the German scholarly works referred to so frequently in the footnotes on his pages.” Specifically, Parker “came to employ certain Leibnitzian terms in his discussion of the problem of evil,” although he “remained unsympathetic” toward Hegel, deploring the fact that he “had to resort to such very intricate reasoning to preserve the divinity of Christ.”¹²¹ Pochmann concludes that Parker’s scholarship “drew on the great German thinkers and theologians at every turn . . . , and, following them, he set a standard of responsible and thorough research such as had not been seen in American theology up to his time.” Yet, “in the end he emerged not so much a thinker or scholar as a pulpit orator and a popular moralist,” for which he drew from German liberals such as Rouge and Francis Lieber.¹²²

Fred Bratton describes Parker as a “liberal” in his book, *The Legacy of the Liberal Spirit*, which includes personalities from Origen to John Dewey. Written during wartime, this book defines liberalism as a configuration of values, and it is uncertain that the term adds anything to an understanding of Parker.¹²³ If anything, Bratton’s concept results in misrepresenting, for example, the relationship between Parker and Thomas Paine.¹²⁴ The bibliography for this chapter contains almost as many references to Channing and Emerson as to Parker, and the text itself is without footnotes which proves a real loss at several points.¹²⁵ The interpretation has little to distinguish it, but on the whole is a trustworthy introduction to Parker.

Another attempt at a synthesis of Parker’s life and personality is my own article, “The Paradox of Theodore Parker.”¹²⁶ Decidedly a partisan statement, the paper was originally written as a sermon and still bears some of the marks of an oral discourse.¹²⁷ No new material is presented, although manuscript locations for a number of letters and journals are indicated. The principle of description involved here is that of interpreting the ambiguity, contradiction, and irony of Parker’s life as paradoxical. That not every aspect of his life fits the interpretation is certain; that some aspects are misrepresented when forced into the mold is likely; but that the article represents the overt and extended application of a descriptive principle is clear.

Although not strictly speaking a biographical study, Truman Nelson’s novel, *The Sin of the Prophet*, is probably the best integrative treatment of Parker since Commager.¹²⁸ Nelson’s rationale for the novel form is that there is “knowledge that cannot be abstractly imparted” but must be embodied in the concrete situation, which in the case of past events and figures

must be re-created historically if possible, fictionally if necessary.¹²⁹ A self-made scholar and successful novelist,¹³⁰ Nelson re-creates Parker with both historical accuracy and singular artistic skill.

Although the medium is that of fiction, Nelson does not exaggerate when he says, "the event is told as it happened, the chronology used is fairly exact."¹³¹ The story of course centers about the Anthony Burns fugitive slave incident, including the arrest and trial, the protest meeting in Faneuil Hall at which Parker spoke, the unsuccessful attack upon the Court House to free Burns, the rendition, and finally Parker's indictment by the grand jury. Nelson not only draws upon the Burns incident for information, but gathers into this book much Parker lore from all periods of his life, including idiosyncrasies anecdotes, descriptions, and pertinent quotations from his letters, journals, and speeches. Nelson receives credit only for being a novelist, but he has assumed the responsibilities of a scholar as well.

Yet when historical data is absent or ambiguous, such as in much of the dialogue Nelson exercises his imaginative and interpretative prerogatives. The dialogue is skilfully phrased in the venacular of the times and often incorporates passages from actual speeches or letters, although the effect of changing the context is sometimes abrupt and inappropriate. The book draws upon Christian symbolism, which is somewhat ironic considering Parker's attitude toward traditional Christianity.¹³² Less surprising is Nelson's tendency to give Parker a more dramatic role than he actually occupied as, for example, in the early trial.

Both Christian symbolism and dramatic interpretation of Parker are involved in what might be considered Nelson's descriptive principle. He sees Parker's failure to launch the planned attack against the Court House during his Faneuil Hall speech as a result of cowardice, which becomes his sin. "It was my responsibility," Parker is portrayed as saying, "I was the one that failed that night and I alone." "I must have been afraid." "This is my sin."¹³³ Since there is no historical confirmation or contradiction of this interpretation, its validity can be assessed only on the basis of its probability. Nelson's interpretation is out of character with much that is known about Parker — his family, his religious reform, and his social reform activities in which he often displayed a great deal of courage.¹³⁴ According to most of the commentaries on the Faneuil Hall meeting, it is as probable, if not more so, that Parker failed to launch the attack because he didn't receive or understand a prearranged signal.¹³⁵

It is curious that Nelson's book has not attracted the attention of more Unitarians; to my knowledge this is its first review in a Unitarian publication. The usual problems of a long book are compounded when the main climax occurs in the first quarter of the work. The style is delightful and moving, although there is a tendency toward overstatement in dialogue as

well as the advocacy of an essentially unfavorable interpretation of Parker. Any of these characteristics could account for its limited popularity, but none can detract from the fact that this book is a classic of Parker literature.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to review the literature on Theodore Parker since Commager's biography in 1936. Our general conclusion is that studies written in this period have tended to be diversified and specialized rather than integrative or comprehensive.

The concentration of post-Commager scholarship in specialized areas has been remarkably fruitful and yielded unprecedented insights, yet there have been significant omissions which suggest directions for further study. Accounts of Parker's transcendentalism have contributed much to understanding his thought, but have placed undue emphasis upon the role of understanding or that of reason; despite Dirks' commendable study, the need for a comprehensive theological treatment remains. There is a particular need to reappraise Parker's Christianity and its significance for Unitarianism today.¹³⁶ In the realms of Parker's social reform and political ideas his views have been made clear, but the extent and effect of his activity, especially his influence upon the leaders of his time, is still uncertain. Parker's public speaking has received an excellent treatment at the hand of Roy McCall, although his prayers, conversation, and homiletics still invite concentrated study. The related fields of literary theory and criticism have been covered, but Parker's literary practice, such as it is, notably his poetry and epistles, is yet to be considered. Hutchison has created an important awareness of the limitations of Parker's personality but has not given the complete picture; a competent psychological study is indicated. Finally, Parker's pastoral ministry, being examined elsewhere in this issue of the *Proceedings*, has long needed attention.¹³⁷

Scholarship in these specialized areas has been characterized by depth and objectivity, but unfortunately also by a detachment from and fragmentation of the historical figure. Thus, Parker's social, political, and even literary ideas have been considered apart from the practice and influence of them. The need increases for biographical or integrative efforts, yet those few that have appeared since Commager's study have been brief and for the most part without original insight. Truman Nelson's novel is unique for its scholarly as well as artistic synthesis.

Consequently, the need remains for a major integrative effort. At the beginning of this paper it was suggested somewhat facetiously that basic studies of Parker have had a way of appearing every twenty or thirty years. It is now almost a quarter of a century since Commager's work. Perhaps the time is approaching for another major biography, particularly in the light

of the limitations of Commager's *Yankee Crusader*, the unparalleled findings recent scholarship has made available, and the tendency of this scholarship to produce a fragmented view of the historical Parker.

An underlying deficiency of both specialized and biographical treatments, has been that of primary documents, specifically Parker's journals and letters. The absence of these documents has been noticeable in studies of Parker's personality, political influence, pastoral ministry, and relation between reason and understanding; it is evident in superficial sketches of Parker's life, and even detectable in Commager.

There is a signal need for a comprehensive edition of the journals and letters of Theodore Parker.¹³⁸ The transient obstacles of locating and deciphering the Parker manuscripts have long enough deprived us of their permanent value. We are presently dependent upon the discretion of early biographers, particularly Weiss, for the fragments they have published. Hopefully, future Parker scholarship will be characterized by a rediscovery of the manuscript sources.¹³⁹

Of a rare vacation before beginning his ministry at West Roxbury, Parker, discontent with his inactivity, wrote in a prophetic mood:

. . . it does not advance me in the journey of life as I would wish to move. It does not allow my soul to unfold its wings in this fledging-place and trial-ground, to prepare for the lofty and dangerous flight when it must 'sail with uplift wing,' against tempest and storm. I have sterner deeds to *do*. Greater dangers to *dare*. *I must be about my work.*¹⁴⁰

At this relatively early point in our study of the prophet of Unitarianism, we have far greater scholarship to do. Let us be about our work.

NOTES

1. John Weiss, *The Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker* (2 vols., New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1864). Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Theodore Parker: a Biography* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1874). John White Chadwick, *Theodore Parker, Preacher and Reformer* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1900). Henry Steele Commager, *Theodore Parker, Yankee Crusader* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1936). Second edition, 1947, Beacon Press; Beacon Paperback, 1960.

2. Although the strengths of Commager's biography are well known, its limitations are less widely recognized and should be summarized here in order to evaluate subsequent work. Criticisms of Commager's work have centered on his attitude toward Parker and upon the thoroughness and depth of his treatment. Although he has disavowed any tendency to interpret Parker in the preface to his 1936 edition, he is most often criticised for his attitude, or lack of it, toward the "Yankee Crusader." One reviewer has suggested that "when an author deliberately tries to exclude his attitude one has a right to feel let down and to suspect ulterior motives." cf. John Chamberlain,

"Portrait Without An Attitude," *Nation*, CXLIII (July 25, 1936), 108. Other reviewers have noted that Commager does not always succeed in excluding his attitude and that when it does appear it lacks consistency: "Now he admires him, now he patronizes him, alternately attracted and repelled by the egoism, the energy, and the optimism of the man." cf. Austin Warren, *American Review*, VIII (April 15, 1936), 251. At any rate, it is clear, according to Newton Arvin, that "Mr. Commager has all the qualifications, indeed, for writing brilliantly about Theodore Parker except sympathy with Parker's strongest impulses and a sense of his special interest for our own generation." cf. Newton Arvin, "A Yankee Savonarola," *New Republic*, LXXXVI (April 15, 1936), 284. A more serious charge is that Commager for all his excellent background in the history of the period lacks depth in preparation: "Commager . . . apparently steeped himself in secondary sources, took a whiff of the most accessible original documents, then gave his imagination free rein and depended on style for the rest." cf. Roy Clyde McCall, "The Public Speaking Principles and Practice of Theodore Parker," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1937, p. 3.

3. Commager, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 164. "Throughout this work," says John Edward Dirks of Commager's biography, "it is assumed that Parker belongs among the leaders of New England transcendentalism." cf. John Edward Dirks, *The Critical Theology of Theodore Parker* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 14.

4. This passage from Commager has proved significant for Dirks and Schneider: "He [Parker] lived in the wonderful afterglow of the Enlightenment, reason tinged with humanitarianism, realism with romanticism. He lived in an age of faith and of hope, in a country where all things seemed possible. He was the heir of the rationalists, but their skepticism seemed irrelevant, here, in America. He was the heir of the idealists, but their abstractions seemed concrete, here in this brave new world." (Commager, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-6)

5. Henry Steele Commager, "The Dilemma of Theodore Parker," *New England Quarterly*, VI (June, 1933), 257-77.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-9, 269, 273, 275, 259.

7. Herbert W. Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), pp. 262-268.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 262, 268, 267-8.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 262, 262, 263. Rene Wellek questions Parker's affinity to Kant and the Enlightenment, suggesting that Parker's was "a false interpretation of Kant. It is more interesting to note," Wellek continues, "that this interpretation is in perfect harmony with the intuitive philosophy of Jacobi or Schleiermacher, of the French eclectics, and even of the Scottish common-sense school. Parker stands with Ripley, but succeeds in interpreting the *Critique of Practical Reason* as support for a philosophy of faith as an instinctive intuition of the human mind." cf. Rene Wellek, "The Minor Transcendentalists and German Philosophy," *New England Quarterly*, XV (1942), 669. Henry August Pochmann confirms Wellek's conclusion: Parker "does not waste time on Kant's fruitless speculation. . . . Instead he readily adopts the intuition of Post-Kantians." "Parker and Kant are as far apart as the two poles; for with Kant moral law is a categorical imperative, and with Parker it is a compound of Christian piety, instinctive intuitions, and the still small voice." Jacobi and Schleiermacher helped formulate "his ideas on the function of intuition." cf. Henry August Pochmann, "Theodore Parker," *German Culture in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), pp. 219, 221, 221.

10. Schneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 266, 264. Schneider's point is well taken that "in his psychology of religion Parker is not clear or consistent (264)," but it seems safe to assume that what he refers to as "affectional fact," "intuitive perception," etc. is at least functionally equivalent to intuition.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

12. Schneider acknowledges that his book "embodies some of the labors and discoveries of students at Columbia University . . . the cream of whose dissertations I have skimmed," and in a bibliographical note he comments, "The question of the extent to which Parker embraced transcendental philosophy is discussed critically in a Columbia University dissertation by J. Edward Dirks, which has not yet been published" (*ibid.*, pp. x, 313).

13. Dirks, *op. cit.*, p. 136. For Dirks' evaluation of Commager cf. pp. 14-5.

14. For example, such statements as the following reflect either a lack of familiarity with the Parker sources, or, what is more likely, an unwillingness to acknowledge their strengths: "While Weiss' biography made no attempts at defining Parker's position in American thought, his account of Parker's early life, ministry and extensive correspondence became the material upon which Octavius Brook Frothingham, one of the first historians of this segment of American ideas, based his belief that 'the preacher' of 'the transcendental gospel' is Theodore Parker" (*ibid.*, p. 4). It is clear that "in addition to the materials that were placed in the hands of Mr. Weiss," Frothingham was "intrusted with many private letters and personal reminiscences" (Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. iv). Many materials were withheld from Weiss' hasty and ill-organized effort when Mrs. Parker chose him as biographer in preference to her husband's provision for Franklin B. Sanborn.

15. Dirks, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

16. A comprehensive study has never been done on Parker's theology comparable to Patterson's treatment of Channing or the recent and very able dissertation on the theology of James Freeman Clarke by Paul Hayes. cf. Robert Leet Patterson, *The Philosophy of William Ellery Channing* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1952). Paul Hayes, "The Comprehensive Theology of James Freeman Clarke," Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Pacific School of Religion, 1960.

17. Dirks, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-4, 23-32, 98, 110, 132-3, 135-6.

18. William R. Hutchison, "Theodore Parker and the Confessional Question," *The Transcendentalist Ministers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 104. Dirks appears dissatisfied with attempts to use Emerson as a norm of transcendentalism in such passages as the following: "Whenever the movement is loosely described, this sentimental romanticism is usually allowed to represent the whole of transcendentalism. Emerson is commonly taken as the adequate expression of all New England transcendentalism." (Dirks, *op. cit.*, p. 17)

19. *Ibid.*, p. 31. Dirks has supplied the italics.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 136, 128, 127.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-6, 119-25.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 121.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. viii, 9, 136. Italics my own this time.

24. *Ibid.*, p. viii. "This succinct statement of the basic view of transcendentalism," says Dirks at one point, "was, however, not peculiar to Parker (87)." Later on he speaks of "Parker's allegiance to the spiritual philosophy of transcendentalism (91)."

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 21-2, 77.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 127, 136, 127, 136.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 99.
28. George F. Newbrough, "Reason and Understanding in the Works of Theodore Parker," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XLVII (January, 1948), 65.
29. Newbrough's distinction between Kant and Parker is illuminating. Kant's reason furnishes "only postulates of supersensuous reality — postulates based upon the demands of the moral law and supported only by an a priori faith; Parker's reason gives an immediate access to the supersensuous." (*Loc. cit.*)
30. *Loc. cit.*
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 74-5.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 75. Without validating his criteria or demonstrating their fulfillment Newbrough asserts that Parker's reason is "final (65)" and offers true "insight into spiritual realities (72)."
33. Dirks, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
34. H. Shelton Smith, "Was Theodore Parker a Transcendentalist?" *New England Quarterly*, XXIII (1950), 352.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 355. True, Parker did refer to it as "the great spiritual trial" of his life, but in the relatively stable life of the young Parker one can question whether, as Smith claims, "this severe ordeal arose over the problem of the source of valid religious knowledge (356)," and resulted in "a satisfying epistemological position in the form of 'certain great primal intuitions of human nature' (357)." Frothingham, for example, testifies: "The new philosophy commended itself to Parker at once, like his mother's milk. . . . He never knew what it was to be converted from the philosophy of sensation to the philosophy of intuition. As a boy, he was a transcendentalist without knowing it" (Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 149).
36. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 354, 355, 363.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 355, 362, 364. Pochmann makes a similar assertion: "the existence and nature of God cannot be ascertained by the finite understanding, since it is an idea of Reason not constitutive, but regulative" (Pochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 220).
38. Rene Wellek's article on the "minor transcendentalists" is also worthy of consideration. It suggests that the early Orestes Brownson "alone can be called a Transcendentalist . . .," but adds: Brownson "is related in outlook and starting point to both Ripley and Parker." For practical purposes Wellek has no reservation about including a brief account of Parker with the scope of his article (Wellek, *op. cit.*, pp. 669, 668-9).
39. Hutchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 102, 103, 104, 105, 103, 105, 104, 104.
40. "These questions are not merely academic in character; they are not raised in the interest of attaching an oversimplifying label to Parker's thought. The intent is, rather, to formulate the philosophical center around which his critical theology revolves" (Dirks, *op. cit.*, p. 16).
41. Donald G. Lothrop, "Theodore Parker, Yankee Crusader," *Christian Register*, CXV (April 30, 1936), 297.
42. William H. Riback, "Theodore Parker of Boston: Social Reformer (1840-1860)," *Social Service Review*, XXII (December, 1948), 451.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 452. Parker's name could not appear, Riback says, because he was "a rebel, a critic of the status quo, and had become so thoroughly identified with both the transcendental revolt in New England's religious life and the oftentimes violent and always uncomfortably disturbing abolition movement that his name was anathema (451)."

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 452-3.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 455, 456, 457.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 458-9, 459.

47. Riback has citations to letters in the Boston Public Library and Harvard's Houghton Library, but has not given references to letters and journals at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the American Unitarian Association. The journals particularly contain a record of Parker's reform activities, although in the case of anti-slavery efforts there are omissions because of imminent legal reprisals.

48. Daniel Aaron, "Theodore Parker: 'The Battle of the Nineteenth Century,'" *Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 21-51.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 39, 50, 40, 41.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 41, 46, 44, 45, 47.

51. From Aaron's bibliography it is clear that he has come in contact with more manuscript materials than almost any other contemporary writer. It is regrettable that his conclusions are not more closely documented with these sources.

52. Arthur I. Ladu, "The Political Ideas of Theodore Parker," *Studies in Philology*, XXXVIII (1941), 120.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-9, 118, 117, 119.

54. John Haynes Holmes, "The Education of Theodore Parker," *Unity*, CXIX (May 17, 1937), 110-14.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 111.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

59. Lyttle suggests briefly the relationship between Parker and Mann: "All through these trying years it was the example and encouragement of Theodore Parker that chiefly sustained Mann's courage." cf. Charles H. Lyttle, "Theodore Parker and Horace Mann, 1837-1937," *Unity*, CXIX (May 17, 1937), 115.

60. If, as Ladu suggests in passing, "with reference to many reforms, Parker advocated no direct political action, but preached for them," then the reforms for which no direct action could have been expected should be distinguished from those whose effect can be ascertained (Ladu, *op. cit.*, p. 120).

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 123, 108, 108, 114.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 111, 108, 115.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 119, 120-1, 121, 121, 123, 122.

64. Aaron, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 33. To Aaron's example of the disparagement of the Irish, I would add Parker's conviction of the West's inferiority and ironically his personal distaste for the Negro.

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 33, 34.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

70. Fred Gladstone Bratton, "Theodore Parker," *The Legacy of the Liberal Spirit* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. 176.

71. An alternate hypothesis, for example, is that Parker imposed himself as a self-appointed adviser and was merely tolerated by his correspondents.

72. Roy Clyde McCall, "Theodore Parker," *The History and Criticism of American Public Address*, ed. William Norwood Bragance, I (New York: McGraw, Hill Co., 1943), 238-64.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240, 255.

74. "The division of rhetoric into five constituent parts," according to Thonssen and Baird, "invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and delivery is based largely upon the work of Aristotle." cf. Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: Ronald Press, 1948), pp. 109, 108. McCall's failure to consider memory as a major canon is typical of recent rhetorical criticism and is compensated for in McCall's case by its inclusion under invention: "Parker's phenomenal powers of memory gave him complete and ready control of his remarkable breadth of reading" (McCall, *History and Criticism*, *op. cit.*, p. 243).

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 244, 246, 251, 252, 261, 261.

76. The bibliographical note at the end of McCall's dissertation is an indispensable account of the disposition of manuscript materials.

77. The field of rhetoric and public address has become almost orthodox in its observance of the Aristotelian system of analysis, but not without cause for Aristotle's rhetoric is one of the best of all times. cf. W. Rhys Roberts (trans.), *Aristotle's Rhetoric* (New York: Modern Library, 1954).

78. David Mead, "Theodore Parker in Ohio," *Northwest Ohio Quarterly*, XXI (1949), 18-23. This article in only slightly modified form became a chapter in Mead's later book. cf. David Mead, "Theodore Parker: Scholarly Divine," *Yankee Eloquence in the Middle West: The Ohio Lyceum 1850-1870* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), pp. 142-48.

79. Mead, "Theodore Parker in Ohio," *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 18, 21, 19, 21, 22, 22, 22-3.

80. For a standard collection of prayers cf. Parker, *Prayers* (Boston: Walker, Wise and Co., 1862). Second edition, 1882, Roberts Bros. of Boston.

81. Russel B. Nye, "The Literary Theory of Theodore Parker," *Michigan Academy of Science Papers XXXII* (1946), 457-70.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 459, 460, 459, 460.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 460.

84. *Ibid.*, pp. 462, 462, 460, 462, 466.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 467.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 463.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 463-4, 464, 466, 465.

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 464, 469, 462, 469, 463.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 470. Nye qualifies this charge of inconsistency by later recognizing Parker's pervasive dualism: "On the one side, he [Parker] was strongly influenced by Kant and the transcendentalists, deriving from them confirmation of his philosophical, and support for his theological views. On the other, he had a strong strain of Yankee realism which led him to respect practicality and distrust the intangible and unscientific. These opposing tendencies, ingrained in Parker's intellectual pattern, characterized his literary and critical thought as well as his religion and humanitarian principles."

90. Stanley M. Vogel, *German Literary Influences on the American Transcendentalists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 118-26.

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 125.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 123, 122, 119.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121, 121, 125, 121, 123.

94. Pochmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 220, 217, 217, 217, 220, 220, 220.

95. The small body of poetry appears in the journals; the letters can be found chiefly in the Boston Public Library and in manuscript volumes deposited in the Massachusetts Historical Society and the American Unitarian Association. For published letters cf. Weiss, *op. cit.*

96. The summary on the book's jacket indicates that it contains a "sympathetic appraisal of the conservative Unitarian position" (Hutchison, *op. cit.*).

97. *Ibid.*, pp. viii, ix, x. "Parker called himself a Christian because he believed Jesus to have been the only man thus far in human history who actually discerned and taught Absolute Religion (106)," but it is clear that he satisfied none of the past and very few of the present standards of confession since he rejected "the supernaturalistic elements in the popular faith (108)," and "Christianity as a unique revelation (124)."

98. *Ibid.*, p. 109. Hutchison quotes Parker's references to Christian doctrine as "the caprice of philosophers," "the refuse of idol temples," "polluted by man with mire and dirt," and "rubbish against the temple of truth." Such extreme examples are found on a continuous half page of the thirty-seven page sermon, which could as easily be characterized by language such as this: "It must be confessed, though with sorrow, that transient things form a great part of what is commonly taught as Religion." cf. Parker, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," *Critical and Miscellaneous Writings* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856), p. 157.

99. This section of Pope's poem, quoted in reference to Communion, seems more exceptional than typical of the *Discourse*:

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight —
A little louder, but as empty quite. (Hutchison, *op. cit.*, p. 117)

100. For opposition testimony cf., *ibid.*, pp. 112-16, for defense testimony cf. p. 126.

101. As Parker suggests in his "Experience as a Minister," other ministers refused "to serve with me on the committee of a college or a school, to attend the same funeral or wedding, to sit on the same bench at a public meeting, to remain in the same public apartment, and trade at the same bookstore, to return my salutation in the street, or reply to my letters" (Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, 499-500). For other evidence of Parker's ostracism cf. Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 175. Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 460.

102. Hutchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 117, 116, 126, 120, 122.

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 109, 109.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 112. One might well expect an angry reply to the *Register*, but the tone of Parker's short letter could be interpreted as pain and disappointment. E.g., "If I am in error I shall be glad to be set right, and the sooner the better." cf. *Christian Register*, XX (July 3, 1841), 106.

105. Hutchison, *op. cit.*, p. 113. Hutchison's paraphrase takes liberty with the strict meaning of the *Miscellany's* review, which contains no reference to Parker's reaction to the *Register*, but simply states, to quote the entire passage in question, "Mr. Parker, we know, will not consider the open and fair expression of dissent from his

opinions the act of injustice to him; the liberty which he takes of condemning the persuasions of others he will accord to them in regard to his own representations." cf. *Monthly Miscellany*, V (July, 1841), 46.

106. Hutchison, *op. cit.*, p. 119. The point is well taken that "the Council had performed an unpleasant duty conscientiously — and courageously, . . . considering the final stand against the vested interests," but whether Parker's "utter disparagement seemed out of order (119)" depends on whether the practice of an ecclesiastical council at all is considered consistent with the aims of a free Church.

107. Hutchison is correct in terming the letters "rhetorical" or "polemical" since their obvious purpose was not so much to obtain information as to stimulate discussion, arouse public interest, and witness Parker's own position — once every eight years does not seem often. Hutchison also acknowledges that "a number of Parker's questions . . . were perfectly legitimate," but asserts without documentation in this instance that the "tone of his writing" "vitiates the effect of these questions" (*Loc. cit.*).

108. *Ibid.*, p. 134. Hutchison's interpretation of this review by Rufus Ellis is not entirely representative; a substantial part of the review is a positive recognition of Parker's "very admirable" reforms. "We love his manly pleas to Christian morality," says Ellis, and "his earnest advocacy of great Christian reforms." cf. *Christian Examiner*, LV (1853), 465.

109. Hutchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 128. It is stretching the point a bit to infer that Parker's exclusion from the Thursday Lecture, for example, was not an "immediate provocation" from the conservative Unitarians.

110. *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 117, 126, 125, 116.

111. *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 116, 135, 127, 136, 136. There are two assumptions here that are equally open to question. First, Hutchison assumes that nothing more could have been expected of the conservative Unitarians than to meet the example set by Parker. The assumption, and it is open to question, is that the potentiality of collective or institutional responsibility is no greater than that of individual responsibility. The second assumption is that the Unitarian Church, and we must hold Hutchison to this rather than to the traditional Christian Church, finds an apt metaphor in the concept of an organism, and thus had a right — indeed a necessity — for all practical purposes to exclude Parker. Hedge notwithstanding, this metaphor is open to question in the light of the unique values of Unitarianism, freedom of belief and tolerance of difference. cf. Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism, Socinianism and Its Antecedents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 5. The valid concern of the Unitarians for maintaining the stability of their corporate worship services is an understandable reason for denying Parker pulpit exchanges, but makes his exclusion from other denominational activities, notably lecturing, less comprehensible.

112. For another brief review of the controversy see Wilbur, *op. cit.*, II, 457-62.

113. Hutchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-9, ix. Hutchison's only bibliographical reference to Parker manuscripts is as follows: "The Parker Collection, deposited in the Boston Public Library, was consulted for information about the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society (209)." The Boston Public Library depository is no more the "Parker Collection" than the important depository at the American Unitarian Association, which Hutchison does not mention. The Boston Public Library collection contains none of the journals and only a part of the letters.

114. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-6.

115. Aaron, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

116. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 25, 27, 28, 32, 31, 30.

117. The following biographical sketches, which occupy a chapter or less in the larger works indicated, are popular presentations of Parker and for the most part are too simplified to offer an original contribution: Stephen Hole Fritchman, "Theodore Parker," *Men of Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944), pp. 145-60; J. Donald Johnston, "An Anthology of the Writings of Theodore Parker," Unpublished B.D. thesis, Meadville Theological School, 1944; Jean Schorer, "Theodore Parker," *Deux Grands Américains* (Geneva: Milieu du Monde, 1947), pp. 77-150; Nina Moore Tiffany, "Theodore Parker," *Pathbreakers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), pp. 52-86; Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944), pp. 61-63.

118. Aaron, *op. cit.*, p. xi. Aaron defines progressivism as follows: a "social philosophy that derived in part from Jeffersonian ideas about popular government, the pursuit of happiness, and the fulfillment of human potentialities, and in part from an unorthodox Protestant Christianity more urgent and more fiercely evangelical than the bland reasonableness of the Enlightenment."

119. For a good account of Parker's travel in Germany and his friendship with several Germans, cf. Pochmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-2, 622.

120. *Ibid.*, pp. 622, 216.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

123. "The word 'liberal' as herein used," says Bratton, "refers to a way of life which emphasizes the primary importance of the person, the freedom of the individual, free press, free speech, constitutional government, tolerance, the scientific spirit of inquiry, the rational outlook, social reform, popular education, a relativistic philosophy, and an ethico-social religion" (Bratton, *op. cit.*, p. viii).

124. After reporting Parker's South Boston Sermon, Bratton asserts, "This was clearly a declaration of Paine's natural religion" (*Ibid.*, p. 162). When Parker was invited to take part in the celebration of Paine's birthday on January 30, 1843, however, he responded, "With the views I entertain of Mr. Paine's character in his later years, I could not, consistently with my own sense of duty, join with you in celebrating his birthday . . . with what I *understand* to be the spirit of his writings on theology and religion I have not the smallest sympathy" (Frothingham, *op. cit.*, p. 179).

125. For bibliography cf. Bratton, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-3.

126. Herbert Edson Hudson, "The Paradox of Theodore Parker," *Crane Review*, I (Spring, 1959), 111-120.

127. Delivered originally at the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Urbana, Illinois, on July 17, 1958. Despite some revision for publication the arrangement stands out too strongly on the printed page and the peroration is somewhat inappropriate.

128. Truman Nelson, *The Sin of the Prophet* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952).

129. *Ibid.*, prefatory note.

130. Cf. other books by Nelson: *Passion by the Brook* (New York: Doubleday, 1953); *The Surveyor* (New York: Doubleday, 1960). According to a letter from Mr. Nelson to the author, January 22, 1960, a fourth novel is now projected which would show the relationship between Parker and John Brown at Harpers Ferry, "thus bringing the lunge into revolutionary violence as begun in the 'Sin of the Prophet' into its full growth and expression."

131. Nelson, *The Sin of the Prophet*, *op. cit.*, prefatory note.
132. Nelson's original plan was to write a series of three books. One dealing with the *passion* beside the brook, the second with the *sin* of the prophet, and the third, the *fall* of John Brown. Within the work in question here, however, there are references to the day of the raid on the Court House as "Bad Friday," of Parker as "Pilate" and "Judas," the trial possibly being "the Resurrection to come," and a splinter from the Court House door becoming "a relic of the true Cross" (*Ibid.*, pp. 118-9).
133. *Ibid.*, pp. 395, 448, 395, 450. Also cf. 111, 226, 415.
134. Not only did he take an armed part in the escape of the Crafts, but he is known to have faced down hostile mobs on several occasions: speech against the Mexican War in Faneuil Hall (Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, 78); Union Meeting in Faneuil Hall (143); and the Pro-Slavery meeting in New York. cf. Peter Dean, *The Life and Teachings of Theodore Parker* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877), p. 203.
135. Cf. O. B. Frothingham, *Theodore Parker: a Biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1886), p. 124. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Cheerful Yesterdays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1898), p. 158. Charles Francis Adams, *Richard Henry Dana, a Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1890), I, 300.
136. Schorer and Pochmann have touched upon Parker's treatment of sin, while Hutchison devotes a little attention to his Christology. (Schorer, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-27; Pochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 219; Hutchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-7).
137. Hutchison briefly considers Parker's ministry, including his worship services, church schools and committees, church finances, etc. (*ibid.*, pp. 178-87).
138. Harold Schwartz of Kent University's History Department has microfilmed the journals held by the American Unitarian Association and, according to a letter to the author of March 28, 1960, wishes "to transcribe the text of Parker's journals and to publish a definitive edition." Two copies of Schwartz's microfilm will be available from the Unitarian Historical Library in a few months. Hopefully, Schwartz will include journals other than those held by the Unitarian Association. cf. Appendix I for known locations of Parker journals.
139. As has been indicated the American Unitarian Association is a chief depository of the Parker manuscripts. cf. H. E. Hudson, "Catalogue of Theodore Parker Papers Deposited with the American Unitarian Association," typewritten copy, Unitarian Historical Library, October 30, 1958, pp. 51. The remainder of the Parker manuscripts are located at the Boston Public Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, or are scattered throughout the country due to their sale to Goodspeed's Book Store in 1915 and their auction in 1918 by C. F. Libbie and Co. If the means are available the Parker Memorial Committee hopes to locate and publish a catalogue of these materials.
140. Weiss, *op. cit.*, I, 88. Manuscript source unknown.

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APPENDIX I

KNOWN LOCATIONS OF PARKER'S JOURNALS *

Journal "F" notes. November 2, 1835-1836. Library of Congress.

Journal "C" notes. 1836-1838. Library of Congress.

Journal volume. July 13, 1838 — December 31, 1840. American Unitarian Association. Pp. 521. Also cf. Journal "H" notes, 1839, Library of Congress.

Journal volume. January, 1841 — October 26, 1843. American Unitarian Association. Pp. 401. Also cf. Journal "I" notes, 1841, Library of Congress.

Journal volume. July 1, 1844 — September 1, 1844. Massachusetts Historical Society. Pp. 89.

Journal volume. November 1, 1844 — September 1, 1847. Massachusetts Historical Society. Pp. 546. Also cf. Journal notes, 1844-1848, Library of Congress. Also cf. Notebook, July 30, 1844 etc., American Unitarian Association, Misc. #32.

Journal "N" notes. 1847 — December 1, 1848. Library of Congress.

Notebook. April 3, 1849 etc. American Unitarian Association. Misc. #29.

Journal "N" notes. March 27, 1851 etc. Library of Congress.

Journal volume. May 19, 1851 — October 4, 1856. American Unitarian Association. Pp. 722. Also cf. Journal "O" notes, May 19, 1851 — October 4, 1856, Library of Congress. Also cf. Notebooks, 1851-1856, American Unitarian Association, Misc. #25, 26, 28.

Notebook. 1856-1857. Illinois State Historical Library, Pp. 195. Also cf. Notebook, 1856, American Unitarian Association, Misc. #30. Also cf. Journal "P" notes, November 3, 1856 etc., Library of Congress. Also cf. Journal notes, August, 1837, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Journal volume. March 3, 1859 — August 26, 1859. American Unitarian Association. Pp. 237.

Notebook. 1860. Starr King School for the Ministry.

* Although this list may appear complete it is most fragmentary. The "journal volumes," which are commonly in the form of bulky ledgers, may alone be considered final and full records. The small leather-bound "notebooks" were written as supplements for the journals, particularly during travels, and except perhaps in the case of 1860 are entered here as a second-best record. The "journal notes," on the other hand, represent but fragments of what apparently were once bound volumes (Weiss, *op. cit.*, I, vi). The years for which only notebooks or journal notes are indicated, therefore, are years for which the main journals are yet to be located.

A DISCOURSE OF MATTERS PERTAINING TO THEODORE PARKER *

BY JOHN WALLACE LAWS

The First Parish, West Roxbury, Mass.

“Lord, we know that we cannot *argue* him down, and the more we say against him, the more will the people flock after him, and the more will they love and revere him. O Lord, what shall be done for Boston if thou dost not take this and some other matters in hand!”¹ These words were uttered as a prayer for and against Theodore Parker on Saturday, March 6th, 1858, at a prayer meeting held at Park Street Church, Boston, within a stone’s throw from the Music Hall where Parker was to preach the next day. Words more uncharitable were said that day: others prayed for great misfortunes and calamities to befall him. In this and the other prayers we can read the fear that the preachers of the “popular theology” had of Parker. Parker was an evangelist of good news of release to the captives to a Calvinist gloom and terror that held many a Christian in the bondage of fear. Parker’s good news was so eagerly received that his congregations numbered in the thousands every Sunday, and he had followers all over the world. A new church began in Germany as a revolt from the Catholic Church, led by Dr. Johannes Ronge, due to Parker. From India came this statement:

The Baboos have given up their idols . . . and have for themselves accepted Theodore Parker. Some are pantheists and others deists. Those who are intimate with educated Hindoos state that no modern writings have exercised a greater influence over them than those of Theodore Parker. It involves no loss of caste to believe in him, but to become a Christian, to attend church and receive the rite of baptism, to believe in Jesus as a Savior is to become an apostate, unclean and impure. No man can become a Christian without being cast off by his dearest friends — wife, children, father, mother, all hate and curse him; but no such consequences follow when idols . . . are rejected, and the theology of Mr. Parker is accepted instead.²

Dr. Krister Stendahl told me that he first heard of Parker from his professor of Christian Ethics at the University of Upsala; and his professor called Parker the man who first preached the social gospel.

The matters pertaining to the great infidel of the Music Hall which are to be discussed in this discourse are the matters of theology. Parker, unlike

* A paper prepared for presentation to the Greenfield Group at Senexet House, Putnam, Conn., April 19, 1960.

many preachers, had a carefully thought out theology behind all his preaching. I propose first to consider Parker's idea of man. Next I will discuss his idea of revelation, his theory of knowledge, and his idea of God. The place of Jesus in his theology will then be discussed; and finally I will consider his doctrine of the church.

I. MAN

Theodore Parker taught that man is of two parts, one natural or material, the other spiritual or immaterial. The natural or material part is man's body. The spirit is his powers and abilities that are not material. Parker believed that the spirit distinguishes man from all other forms of life. He contrasts two realms, "nature, the world of matter, and . . . spirit, the world of man."³ Man is a product of development from the lower to the higher. He is not the result of a fall from perfection to barbarity and a slow climb through grace toward perfection again. In his *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion* Parker wrote, "The analogy of the geological formation of the earth; its gradual preparation, so to say, for the reception of plants and animals, the ruder first, and then the more complex and beautiful, till at last she opens her bosom to man — this, in connection with many similar analogies, would tend to show that a similar order was to be expected in the affairs of men; development from the lower to the higher and not the reverse. In strict accordance with this analogy, some have taught that man was created in the lowest stage of savage life; his religion the rudest worship of nature; his morality that of the cannibal; that all of the civilized races have risen from this point, and gradually passed through fetishism and polytheism, before they reached refinement and true religion; the spiritual man is the gradual development of germs latent in the natural man."⁴ Man has three primal instincts, "the hunger for bread, which keeps the individual alive, and the hunger for posterity, which perpetuates mankind . . ." ⁵ and the hunger for God. "Here and there," he said, "an individual man neglects the one or the other, the instinct of food, of kind, of religion; but the human race nor does, nor can." ■

The instinct for God is a sense of dependence, a sense of incompleteness, of finitude. Man, like all the rest of creation, is finite, dependent, and variable. This is true not only of his body but also of his spirit. God alone is infinite, self-subsisting, and unchanging.

The spirit of man is not his body. Parker divided the spirit into four parts: "the intellectual, — including the aesthetic, — moral, affectional, and religious."⁷ He called the intellectual part *mind*. The mind includes the threefold powers of reason, imagination and understanding. *Conscience* was his name for the moral faculties of man's spirit. *Heart* was his word for the affectional part of the spirit; and for the religious, *soul*. The four part

division of man's spirit is found in all his preaching, is repeated over and over as a recurrent theme. For example, Parker criticized the God of "popular theology" on the grounds that He is imperfect in "wisdom, justice, benevolence, and holiness."⁸ He spoke of the "laws written in this marvelous body; the laws of the understanding, the conscience, the affections, the soul."⁹ He spoke of the function of the minister as a teacher of "the mind and conscience and heart and soul of the people," "to learn and teach absolute truth, justice, loveliness and self-subsistent holiness."¹⁰ When he spoke of the perfection of God, he characterized it in the same four terms as "the perfection of mind, all-knowingness; the perfection of conscience, all-righteousness; of affection, all-lovingness; of soul, all-holiness, perfect self-fidelity."¹¹ Of men he wrote, "Now, as in the days of Adam, Moses, Jesus, he that is faithful to reason, conscience, heart and soul, will, through them, receive inspiration to guide him through all his pilgrimage."¹²

Parker's four-part division led him to make a similar division when he considered man's religious duties. *Manly piety* is piety of the mind, of the conscience, of the heart, and of the soul; he devoted his *Ten Sermons of Religion* to a consideration of these four pieties. A reading of the titles will demonstrate: Of Piety, the Relation thereof to Manly Life, Of Truth and the Intellect, Of Justice and the Conscience, Of Love and the Affections, Of Conscious Religion and the Soul. That is half the book.

Piety of the mind is to contemplate God as manifested in *truth* and *beauty*. He said, "To love God with the mind, is to love Him as manifesting Himself in the truth, or to the mind; it is to love truth, not for its uses, but for itself, because it is true, absolutely beautiful and lovely to the mind. In finite things we read the infinite truth, the absolute object of the mind."¹³

Piety of the conscience is the contemplation of God as manifested in *right*, in *justice*. Parker said, "To love God with the conscience is to love Him as manifested in right and justice; is to love right or justice, not for its convenience, its specific uses, but for itself, because it is absolutely beautiful and lovely to the conscience. In changeable things we read the unchanging and eternal right, which is the absolute object of conscience."¹⁴

Piety of the heart is the contemplation of God as manifested in *love*. He said, "The mind and conscience are content with ideas, with the true and the right, while the heart demands not ideas, but beings, persons; and loves them. . . . But as the mind and conscience use the finite things to help learn infinite truth and infinite right, and ultimately rest in that as their absolute object, so our heart uses the finite persons whom we reciprocally love as golden letters in the book of life, whereby we learn the absolutely lovely, the infinite object of the heart."¹⁵

The *piety of the soul* is the contemplation of God as a Being Who unites truth, right and love in Himself. "He is to the soul," said Parker,

“absolutely true, just, and lovely, the altogether beautiful. To Him the soul turns instinctively at first; then also, at length, with conscious and distinctive will. . . . The love of God in this fourfold way is the totality of piety, which comes from the normal uses of all the faculties named before. Hence it appears that piety of this character lies at the basis of all manly excellence whatever, and is necessary to a complete and well-proportioned development of the faculties themselves.”¹⁶

Parker believed that innate in man was not only the sense of dependence, but also a sense of immortality. He thought that the idea of immortality “came to mankind by intuition, by instinctive belief — the belief which comes unavoidably from the nature of man. In the same way came the belief in God. . . .”¹⁷

Parker, in demonstrating his case for a belief in immortality, showed another side of his view of man. He said,

Man is not fully grown, as the acorn and the chestnut; never gets mature. Take the best man and the greatest, — all his faculties are not developed, fully grown and matured. He is not complete in the qualities of a man: nay, often half his qualities lie all unused. Shall we conclude these are never to obtain development and do their work? The analogy of nature tells us that man, the new-born plant, is but removed by death to another soil, where he shall grow complete and become mature.¹⁸

His idea of man as a composite of matter and spirit, of nature and spirit, reveals Parker to be a child of his times. He divided man; modern psychology and anthropology have seen that man must be understood as a whole being. He is not made up of matter and spirit, but is a psychophysical organism that has spirit as life. The division of man's faculties into mind, conscience, heart and soul is more a division of one's way of describing man, but it is no real division of man. Here Parker's analysis of man was hurt by the science of his day; Freud and Smuts had not been born. Parker's difference from his contemporaries was in his rejection of the supernatural as an explanation or description of man's spirit, and his rejection of the miraculous. He was a thorough-going naturalist. His hunger, however, for absolutes (a characteristic of the Romantics, including the Transcendentalists), his unawareness of the anxiety of finitude and guilt and meaninglessness, makes his thought seem a little archaic today. Parker died on the eve of the War of Rebellion; he did not know the mushroom cloud; he could not imagine the high probability of universal destruction.

Nevertheless Parker knew of evil; he was an active warrior in the battle against it. He plunged into the battle fearlessly because he was sure that evil was merely the-good-incomplete. It had no absolute being, and was not the negation of the good. This belief makes the struggle for social justice and human freedom seem hopeful, and victory possible. He said,

Evil is partial. There is no absolute evil. Man advances forever. . . Man oscillates in his march as the moon nods in her course. Pain marks the limits of his vibration; the variables of human caprice are perpetually controlled by the constants of divine Providence.¹⁹

Of sin and retribution he said:

The pain of sin is the pain of surgery, nay, the pain of growth. My sin-burnt soul dreads the consuming fire, its pain a partial good. God provides for it all, making all things work together for good. My suffering shames me from conscious wrong, stings me into efforts forever new; and I fall from consuming Sodom with a swifter flight. The loving-kindness of the Infinite Mother has provided also for this evil, for its cure. There is retribution everywhere — for I am conditioned by the moral law of God. In youth passion tempts me to violate the integrity of my consciousness with its excess, I love the pleasure of the flesh; in manhood ambition offers the more dangerous temptation, I love the profit of selfishness. If I yield and sacrifice the eternal beauty of the true, the just, the good, the holy to the riot of debauch, or to the calculated selfishness of that ambition, there comes the subjective consequences — a sense of falseness, of shame, a loathing of myself, the leprous feeling that I am unclean, the sleepless worm which gnaws the Self-condemning heart; then comes the outward evil, the resultant of my wrong — men band against me, to check my wicked deeds. One wheel is blocked by remorse; and human opposition holds the other fast. So suffering keeps my wrong in check. I am thus pained by every evil thing I do. In the next life I hope to suffer till I learn the mastery of myself, and keep the conditions of my higher life. Through the Red Sea of pain I will march to the promised land, the divine ideal guiding from before, the Egyptian actual urging from behind.²⁰

We wonder what Parker would have said about Buchenwald and Hiroshima? He never quite freed himself from penal theology, although he became a Universalist in his pansoteriology. Hell was real, but it had become purgatory. He had a sense of sin, but no sense of finitude with regard to his own spirit or life. It was of infinite duration; it needed duration to realize its potential, its full capacities. He said, "While this composite body unavoidably decays, this simple soul which is my life decays not: reason, the affections, all the powers that make man, decay not."²¹ Hence man is essentially infinite, like God. Parker doesn't agree with himself.

Parker also understood man as a creature endowed with certain natural rights. He went to Jefferson for his list of these rights. Man's natural rights, as stated by Parker, are the three listed in the beginning of the Declaration of Independence: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Like Jefferson, Parker insisted that these rights are God-given, natural and inalienable, a part of man's essential character. Moreover, all men are equal with respect to these rights — no man has a greater or less right to life, liberty and to pursue happiness than any other man, no matter how unequal men may be from one another with respect to wealth, strength and power.²² Parker drew political conclusions from these rights, which we shall discuss later.

II. REVELATION

The doctrine of revelation is religious epistemology. What sources of religious knowledge are open to us? The key words in the Transcendentalist epistemology are *Reason*, *intuition*, and *understanding*, and Parker was a Transcendentalist. The modern reader of Parker, unfortunately unaware of the special meaning given these three words, gains a distorted view of Parker's thought. He takes Parker's emphasis on *Reason* to mean that Parker wanted man to use his reasoning power in the search for religious truths, an embracing of the scientific method as applied to religion and religious experience; this is wide of the mark. In his *Discourse* Parker said of man's belief in God, "It depends primarily on no *argument* whatever, not on *reasoning* but on *Reason*."²³ He also said that "the existence of God . . . is expressed by the spontaneous intuition of Reason."²⁴ Also:

Now spiritual, like bodily faculties, act jointly and not one at a time, and when occasion is given from without us, Reason, spontaneously, independent of our forethought and volition, acting by its own laws, gives us, by intuition, an Idea of that on which we depend. To this Idea we give the name of GOD or GODS as it is represented by one or several conceptions. Thus the existence of God is implied by the natural sense of dependence, in the religious sentiment itself; it is expressed by the spontaneous intuition of Reason.²⁵

Later he writes, "The knowledge of God's existence, therefore, may be called an INTUITION OF REASON in the language of Philosophy; or a REVELATION FROM GOD, in the language of the elder Theology."²⁶

Parker was using the categories of the Transcendentalists, categories assumed among them; therefore Parker never described them in detail. His meaning is unmistakable once we recognize the nature of his categories. *Reason*, for Parker, is the power of common and inescapable beliefs, the source and material of truths above sense that have their proofs in themselves. One can easily substitute the word *intuition* for the word *Reason* and do no violence to Parker's meaning. *Reasoning* deals with logic, deductive and inductive, experiment and experience. *Reason* deals with the intuitions that are innate in man, intuitions of his own existence, his sense of dependence, his conscience, and his immortality. We can have *reasoning* about the *intuitions of Reason*. *Reasoning* is the *understanding*. The realm of science is the realm of the understanding and of reasoning. All that comes to us through our senses comes to the understanding. Understanding is discursive, descriptive and secondary, unlike the intuitions of Reason, which are direct, immediate and primary. Once this distinction is mastered, we will grasp Parker's thought, and no longer equate *Reason* with *reasoning* and *understanding*. We then become aware of the mysticism on which Parker's religion and thought rested.

The fundamental revelation for evangelical Christianity is the Bible. Parker freed Unitarians from bondage to the Bible, and made it possible

for us to use it more constructively than those who use it with awe for its infallibility, or as the word of God. His attitude toward the Bible is fundamentally the same as that of us all. An idea is not true simply because it is in the Bible. Great falsehoods, such as the slanders against the Jews in Matthew, have been enshrined in the Bible, and, to the harm of mankind, are accepted by the orthodox as true, simply because they are in the Bible. Parker's love of freedom, and his naturalism led him to say that the Bible is not the foundation of religion. It is not even the foundation of Christianity. It is not greater than conscience and Reason ("they are directly from God"). The Bible is a teacher, but pupils may outgrow their teacher. It is more than a teacher; it is a comforter, but men may grow in strength and become comforters, rather than the comforted. The revelation of God to man is not mediated through the Bible, but is direct, in the intuitions of Reason; the revelation in the Bible is, at best, only secondary, an account of past revelations of God to other men. "The best thing in the Bible," he said, "is the free genius of religion, which is itself inspiration, and not only learns particular truths through its direct normal intercourse with God, but creates new men in its own likeness, to lead every Israel out of his Egypt, and conduct all men to the Land of Promise. Whoso worships the Bible loses this." ²⁷

III. God

Piety is central in Parker's religion, the manly piety of mind, conscience, heart and soul. A basic intuition of Reason, the being of God as ground of all that exists is the object of piety. Parker's theism was naturalistic, with God immediately present in the intuitions of Reason in every man. Parker claimed that man is too finite and limited to know the fullness of God. "There must be many qualities of God," said Parker, "not at all known to men, some of them not at all knowable by us; because we have not the faculties to know them by. . . Then our idea of God is true as far as it goes, only it does not describe the whole of God." ²⁸

So far as God is understandable, His quality is different in kind from the world of nature, or matter, and from the world of spirit, or man. Parker set the finitude of nature and spirit (matter and man) against the infinity of God; their dependence against His self-subsistence, their variableness against His unchanging quality. Nevertheless, Parker said, "God must include both, matter and spirit." ²⁹

Parker's description of God's perfection relates directly to the description of piety. Man's devotion to God is man's piety. It is expressed in terms of mind, conscience, heart and soul. God is perfect. His perfection is the perfection of all-knowingness, all-righteousness, all-lovingness, and all-holiness, God is to be honored as Truth (and Beauty), Right and Justice, Love, and Holiness.³⁰ The doxology much used among Unitarians expresses this

view of God. "Praise God, the Love we all may share" is the piety of the heart. "Praise God, the beauty everywhere" is piety of the mind. "Praise God, the hope of good to be," is piety of the conscience, and "Praise God, the truth that makes us free," is piety of the mind. The whole thing is piety of the soul, expressed in the "Amen."

The innovation made in the doctrine of God by Parker could have been made only by a man free from bondage to Biblical theism. Parker ventured to describe God, not only as Father, but also as Mother. In his final report to the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society he wrote "I have called God Father, but also Mother, not by this figure implying that the Divine Being has the limitations of the female figure . . . but to express more sensibly the quality of tender and unselfish love, which mankind associates more with Mother than ought else besides."³¹

For Parker God was not a personal God, but Parker consistently used pronouns of personality, and words like *Father* and *Mother*. In all his prayers God is addressed as a person. His disclaimer of belief in God as a person, and his excuse for the personal pronouns, may be found in the *Discourse*: "The conception of God, as men express it in their language, is imperfect, self-contradictory and impossible. Human actions, human thoughts, human feelings, yes, human passions and all the limitations of mortal men, are collected in the Idea of God."³² Later in that chapter he wrote:

Our human personality gives a false modification to all our conception of the Infinite. But if, not resting in the sentiment of God, which is vague, and leads rather to pantheistic mysticism than to a *reasonable* faith, we take the fact given in our nature; the primitive Idea of God, as a Being of infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness involves no contradiction. This is, perhaps, the most faithful expression of the Idea that words can convey. This language does not define the nature of God, but distinguishes our Idea of Him, from all other ideas and conceptions whatever.³³

With this in mind we must allow Parker his personal pronouns and ascriptions when he prays to or discusses God.

IV. JESUS

The most confusing part of Parker's theology is the place of Jesus in it. Whenever I sing "O Thou Great Friend to All the Sons of Men"³⁴ I wonder just what Parker meant when he wrote the line, "Who once appeared in humblest guise below." Does this mean that Parker thought Jesus to be pre-existent, like the Logos in the prologue to John's gospel? His words lend themselves to this interpretation. Parker said later in the same sonnet that Jesus is "still the Life, . . . the Way the Holiest know, — Light, Life and Way of Heav'n!" Is Jesus still among us as a living presence, as evangelical Christians still believe? The sonnet seems to indicate this. And yet — ?

We know that Parker, in his analysis of the transient and permanent in Christianity, numbered Jesus among the transient things; thus bringing the wrath of his Unitarian colleagues down upon him. He said that what Jesus taught was not true because he taught it; he taught it because it was true. Hence the truth of Christian teaching depends not on the teacher, but on the teaching. If Jesus had never lived, the teachings would still be true, just as what Newton discovered is true irrespective of the nature of the discoverer. When Parker dismissed Jesus in this way, what role did Jesus play in his theology?

In Parker's prose Jesus is consistently spoken of and discussed as a man, and as no more than man, a man who was the son of Joseph and Mary, not pre-existent, not still present, who had no resurrection and ascension. Perhaps Parker's poems about Jesus are poetic hyperbole. Yet, for Parker, Jesus was an example of religious excellence or religious genius in a human being, an excellence and genius surpassing all other men in all times. It is only as exemplar that he is the Light, Life and Way of Heaven. Only as the Logos (Reason) is in all men, is it preeminently in Jesus; in this sense alone can he be said to appear "in humblest guise below." Parker said:

Above all men do I bow my face before that august personage, Jesus of Nazareth, who seems to have had the strength of man and the softness of woman — man's mighty, wide-grasping, reasoning, calculating, and poetic mind; and woman's conscience, woman's heart, and woman's faith in God. He is my best historic ideal of human greatness; not without errors, not without the stains of his times, and, I presume, of course not without sins — for men without sins exist in the dreams of girls, not in real fact; you never saw such a one, nor I, and we never shall. But Jesus of Nazareth is my best historic ideal of a religious man, and revolutionizes the vulgar conception of human greatness. What are your Caesars, Alexanders, Cromwells, Napoleons, Bacons, and Leibnitz, and Kant, and Shakespeare, and Milton even — men of immense brain and will — what are they all to this person of large and delicate intellect, of great conscience, and heart and soul far mightier yet?³⁵

Parker called Jesus, "The greatest fact in the whole history of man."³⁶ Of the resurrection he wrote:

If he had lived such a life as Herod did, do you suppose man would ever have told the story of his resurrection from the dead, and celebrated Easter Festival over the event? No, they would have hated him the more if he had been raised from the dead. It was his character that made men believe he wrought miracles. It is this which makes his memory so precious to the world.³⁷

The greatest gift Jesus gave to the world was his description of religion as love to God and love to man. Parker consistently claimed that this is the essence of all true religion, the sum of man's duty to God and neighbor: piety to God, and love to man. The fact that Jesus had the genius to select from among all the laws in the Old Testament the two which demand love to God and love to man, and made these two the irreducible essence of religion, shows how great was his genius in religion. And the further fact

that he lived his doctrine of love to God and man is evidence of the sincerity of his teaching. For Parker, Jesus is preeminent among exemplars, and greatly to be loved and remembered and followed. But Jesus was no more than man, and no less than man.

V. THE CHURCH

Christ founded no church, said Parker. Nevertheless, "the Christian Church may be defined as a body of men and women united in a common regard for Jesus, assembled for the purposes of worship and religious instruction. It has the powers delegated by individuals who compose it."³⁸ The substance of Christianity is the substance of what Jesus taught, that is, "piety — love to God, and goodness — love to men."³⁹ Its actions are twofold, on its members, and through them on others. The church must stimulate its members to manly piety of mind, conscience, heart and soul, and to goodness, the activity of mind, conscience, heart and soul toward other people. Thus the church must be a reforming church.

There are two kinds of reforming activity, reforming charity; Parker likened them to acts of people with regard to a bridge with a great hole in its middle. Some would save the people who fall through the hole, feed, clothe, and heal them, and send them on their way; would put up a great light to show the hole by night, and a sign to warn by day. But the best reformer is the one who puts his efforts toward the repair of that hole so that it should be no more. A Christian church must reform the world after the pattern of Christian ideals: love to God and love to man. It must condemn evil with a sure voice. It must help the fallen and enslaved, but even more remove the causes for stumbling, and make slavery impossible. "It seems to me," said Parker in his installation sermon as minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston,

that a church which dares name itself Christian, the church of the Redeemer, which aspires to be a true church, must . . . be not merely a church of theology, but of religion; not of faith only, but of works; a just church by its faith bringing works into life. It should not be a church termagant, which only peevishly scolds at sin, in its anile way; but a church militant against every form of evil, which not only censures, but writes out on the walls of the world the brave example of a Christian life, that all may take pattern therefrom. Thus only can it become the church triumphant.⁴⁰

The Christian church, for the Transcendentalist, must not limit itself to past inspiration; not limit itself to past example. It must be open to new inspiration and present a new example to the world. Parker urged his new congregation with these words: "Let us have a church for the whole man: truth for the mind; good works for the hands; love for the heart; and for the soul, that aspiring after perfection, that unfaltering faith in God which, like lightning in the clouds, shines brightest when elsewhere it is most dark."⁴¹ You will have noted again the four elements of piety.

The Christian church must not be bound to Christianity. The church must ever reform itself as it strives to reform the world, and it must "gather from the past, from the Bible, from the Catholic and Protestant Churches, from Jew and Gentile, Buddhist, Brahman, and Mahometan, every old truth which they have got embalmed in their precious treasures; and then to reach out and upwards toward God, and get every new truth that we can, and join all these together into a whole theological truth — then to deepen the consciousness of God in our own soul, and make the absolute religion the daily life of men." ⁴² After I read those words I thought, "Parker would have been happy with the purposes as adopted at Syracuse."

Earlier I described Parker's idea about the rights of men, adding that I would have something further to say. This is the place to say it, where we discuss the church. The church exercises its functions in the state, and with relation to the state the church has its duty of exemplar and prophet. Parker was the prophet of freedom, the only voice against the slave trade that spoke from a pulpit in Boston. His argument against slavery was built on two basic beliefs: 1) his belief in man, in man's powers and potentialities, his piety and goodness, and 2) his belief in the innate, inalienable rights of man, and the kind of government required by these rights. He said:

Now this government, just in its substance, in its forms must be democratic; that is to say, the government of all, by all, and for all. You see what consequences must follow from such an idea, and the attempt to re-enact the law of God into political institutions. There will follow the freedom of the people, respect for every natural right of all men, the rights of their body, and of their spirit — the rights of mind and conscience, heart and soul. There must be some restraint — as of children by their parents, as of bad men by good men; but it will be restraint for the joint good of all parties concerned; not restraint for the exclusive benefit of the restrainer. The ultimate consequence of this will be the material and spiritual welfare of all — riches, comfort, noble manhood, all desirable things. That is the idea of freedom." ⁴³

VI. CONCLUSION

In 1839, three years before Parker's *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion* was published in Boston, thirteen priests in the Church of England engaged three Unitarian ministers in a debate in Liverpool on the subject of Unitarianism. The addresses in the debate have been collected in two volumes: The Anglican side called *Unitarianism Confuted*; the Unitarian side called *Unitarianism Defended*. The opening lecture of the debate, delivered by Fielding Ould, began with four indictments of Unitarianism. The Rev. Mr. Ould said:

I. That Unitarianism tends to depreciate and lower the authority of Holy Scripture, so as to make it doubtful what is, and what is not, inspired.

II. That Unitarianism tends to diminish and lessen, rather than to promote, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the distinguishing grace of Christianity.

III. That Unitarianism tends to foster and cherish pride – the pride of human reason – at the expense of evangelical humility.

IV. That Unitarianism tends to promote infidelity.⁴⁴

Mr. Ould here put in a nutshell the very things which made the Benevolent Fraternity act unbenevolently toward Parker, which stimulated the members of Park Street Church to have a special prayer meeting to pray against Parker, which made his Unitarian colleagues turn against and try to force his West Roxbury parish to dismiss him, and adopt Machiavellian stratagems to keep him from being a Great and Thursday Lecturer. The allegations in Mr. Ould's indictment of Unitarianism were the very fears which led to the attack on Parker. Does the Unitarianism of Parker warrant this indictment?

I. It is true that Parker did depreciate and lower the authority of Holy Scripture. The Bible no longer speaks to us as it did in the opening years of the nineteenth century. The doctrine of verbal inspiration of the Bible is now quite dead in liberal religious circles. The Biblical scholarship stimulated in this country by Parker's translation of DeWette created the modernist controversy; now the Bible is no longer regarded as the word of God, although many believe it contains the Word of God. Even this view is too close to Bibliolatry to satisfy Parker. His love of freedom was so strong that he would not accept bondage to anything, not even the Bible. Men are not made for the Bible any more than they are made for the Sabbath.

Further, the Transcendentalist view of inspiration surely did bring into question the authenticity of the inspiration of the Bible. The way in which modern Unitarian ministers use extra-Biblical readings in worship services reveals how far we have accepted Parker's view of inspiration. Either other literature has been elevated to the height of the Bible, or it has been lowered to the level of other literature. One sad result has come of this tendency among us: the requirement of a reading knowledge of Greek and Hebrew has been dropped from all our theological education, and as a result there are now no Unitarians who are Biblical scholars; thus leaving the whole of Biblical scholarship to Lutherans and fundamentalists.

The first indictment is true both of Parker and of us.

II. It is true that Unitarianism since Parker has tended to diminish and lessen love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Parker never called Jesus Lord, and his ardent denial of the Arianism of many of his contemporaries in Unitarian pulpits led to the establishment of a purely human Jesus in Unitarianism. This process began when King's Chapel omitted all prayers addressed to Jesus from its Prayer Book. By the process of demoting Jesus from his place as cornerstone to a position as a piece of moveable furniture of Christendom, Parker effectively diminished Jesus, and so diminished his

importance in liberal religion. If devotion to Jesus is the distinguishing grace of Christianity, we are not Christians. There will probably be more sermons from Unitarian pulpits about Parker this year than about Jesus.

We must concede that Mr. Ould's second charge is true. Parker's probable reaction? Deep regret, since Parker loved the character and memory of Jesus, and had a deep devotion to his Way. Yet it was Parker's theology that gave momentum to the dethrone-Jesus movement among Unitarians.

III. Does Unitarianism tend to foster and cherish pride? Transcendentalism certainly did, with its glorification of the immediate inspiration of God to man, of the "intuitions of Reason." With our loss of Transcendentalist epistemology, this pride is also lost. Now the intellectually proud are not the liberals but the orthodox, who claim to be able to recognize infallible creeds, scriptures, doctrines, or bishops, when they meet them. To know any infallible as such the knower will have to be infallible, which no man is. We cannot be so arrogant as that, nor would Parker. He was aware that the understanding may be used poorly with relation to the revelations of Reason, and come up with error and deceit masking as revelations of the Most High. It is not Unitarianism that fosters intellectual pride; it is orthodoxy.

Mr. Ould's third indictment is false.

IV. Did Parker's teaching tend to promote infidelity? I think not. Parker preached to people who had no church home among the evangelicals and the orthodox Unitarians of his day. Parker surprised his hearers for he taught them as one having authority; and not as the scribes. He had taken Emerson's Divinity School address seriously. The faith Parker taught, the piety he preached and practiced, was not a faith or piety that depended on assent to dogmas or creeds. It was a trust and fidelity that needed no infallible creed as a comfort or staff. It may be harder to be religious on this basis, but Unitarians are willing to try.

How better then to conclude this discourse than with Parker's own words, given at his installation as minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society in Boston:

There stand the dirty, fetid pools of worldliness and sin; curdled, and mantled, film-covered, streaked, and striped with many a hue, they shine there, in the slanting light of newborn day. Around them stand the sons of earth and cry, Come hither; drink thou and be saved! Here fill thy golden cup! There you may seek to fill your urn; to stay your thirst. The deceitful element, roping in your hands, shall mock your lip. It is water only to the eye. Nay, show-water only to men half-blind. But there, hard by, runs down the stream of life, its waters never frozen, never dry; fed by potential dews falling unseen from God. Fill there thine urn, O brother-man, and thou shalt thirst no more

for selfishness and crime, and faint no more amid the toil and heat of day; wash there, and the leprosy of sin, its scales of blindness, shall fall off, and thou be clean for ever. Kneel there and pray; God shall inspire thy heart with truth and love, and fill thy cup with neverending joy ! ⁴⁵

NOTES

All references, except as otherwise noted, are to the Centenary Edition of Parker's collected works, published in Boston between 1907 and 1911 by the American Unitarian Association. The volumes referred to are as follows:

- I. *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, 1907.
- II. *Theism and Atheism*, 1910.
- III. *Sermons of Religion*, 1908.
- IV. *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity*, 1908.
- V. *Lessons from the World of Matter and of Man*, 1910.
- VI. *The World of Matter and the Spirit of Man*, 1907.
- XII. *The Rights of Man in America*, 1911.
- XIII. *Autobiography, Poems and Prayers*, 1910.
1. XIII, 485.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
3. II, 195.
4. I, 98f.
5. VI, 144.
6. *Ibid.*
7. III, 1.
8. IV, 144.
9. II, 145.
10. VI, 72.
11. II, 198.
12. I, 206f.
13. III, 3.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 3f.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 321.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 328.

19. II, 384.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 385ff.
21. III, 328.
22. XII, 362ff.
23. Theodore Parker, *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*. Boston: Charles C. Little & James Brown, 1842, p. 22.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 21f.
27. Centenary Edition, *op. cit.*, XIII, 319.
28. II, 194.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
31. XIII, 332f.
32. Discourse, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
34. Centenary Edition, *op. cit.*, XIII, 425.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 62f.
36. IV, 56.
37. V, 321f.
38. I, 350.
39. XIII, 19.
40. XIII, 32f.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
42. II, 18.
43. XII, 363f.
44. Thirteen Clergymen of the Church of England, *Unitarianism Confuted*. Liverpool: Henry Perris, 1839, 10.
45. Centenary Edition, *op. cit.*, XIII, 48f.

THEODORE PARKER: THE MAN AS A MINISTER*

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Theodore Parker was a minister, but in no ordinary sense of the word. He redefined the role to suit his own needs, capacities and situation. His ministry depended specifically on his striking powers as a person, and on his own sense of mission and destiny. We shall begin by discussing the man, pointing out the dramatic features of his religious, intellectual and emotional life. We shall point out how from these powers and from his public reception, both popular and unpopular, he developed an increasing sense of his own unique purpose in life. We shall then attempt to relate this understanding to a description of Parker's actual ministry.

Parker, as man and as minister, must first be seen in terms of his religious life which was an active, intense and real part of his being. This religious life had two phases — the ecstatic or mystical phase which he called Piety, and the phase of religious duty which he called Morality. No one can read a life of Parker without being impressed by his devotional interest. Much of this was due to a religious training at the hands of a sensitive and pious mother. Parker often referred to this debt to her. He recounts one incident where he was about to strike a turtle, when a voice within him said, "It is wrong." His mother interpreted this to him, "I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer and always guide you right."¹ Thus the boy was encouraged in religious sensitivity.

Parker's public prayers breathe a humble and lively sense of communion with God. One who sat near him during the services in the Music Hall said that there were often tears on Parker's face, as he prayed. He once said, "To myself it [the pastoral prayer] has always been the most moving part of the service."² Yet this public prayer was the outward expression of his own private religious habits. He wrote in his journal, "I *orient* myself before God in each place. If I go to pass the summer anywhere, the first thing I look for in the fields is a place for prayer and silent communion with my God."³ Again, he said, "I sing prayers when I loiter in the woods, or travel the quiet road . . ."⁴ Parker depended strongly on this devotional

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life for his inspiration and strength. At times, he came close to glorifying it. "If there be anything strong in my character," he once wrote to Samuel Gridley Howe, "it is this very *love of God and trust in God.*"⁵

Yet despite this religious joy and ecstasy, Parker considered religion to be a duty and an obligation. "Religion," he said, "is what man owes to God."⁶ Man owes to God the works of piety — prayer, penitence and aspiration. Man also owes love to man in Morality, and the consequent works of righteousness. The church is a "common body of men and women, united in a common desire for religious excellence."⁷ And the function of the minister in such a church is "to show what this piety and morality demand . . . first of individual life; then in the form of domestic life; then of social, political, ecclesiastical and general human life."⁸ Parker is defining religion here primarily in terms of requirement and performance. Despite his private devotional life Parker's public religion was primarily a moralistic one. His childhood experience with the turtle was one of "Thou shalt not."

Parker believed in the infinite perfection of God. A corollary to this belief was the possibility of the infinite progression of man along moral and spiritual paths. He wrote, "I see no limit to this power of progressive development in man; none to man's power of religious development."⁹ Because man's power to respond is infinite, the requirements of such a moralistic religion are also infinite. There is no resting place in such a system, no stopping point where man can be "accepted." Parker wrote in his journal, "I have no *desire for wealth*, as little for *fame* . . . I have no *children*, and the delights which [come] to most men are not for me. Still I have *Duty* — and *Truth*. Is that enough? . . . if I am well, I will *work* — *work* — *work*. I will not work for fame, . . . or for Power, but *for God*. I cannot be *happy*, I may be useful. I think I shall be."¹⁰ Some years later he wrote, "Religion keeps me at this desk and sends me to a thousand things which even now I like not to do."¹¹ God may have been the mystic power of being to Parker, but he was also a taskmaster. He writes to his long-dead father in his journal, "The excellent thing you taught me was *duty* — duty to God, duty to man, that life was not a pleasure, nor a pain, but a *duty* . . . As you look down from heaven — if indeed you can see — there must be much to chide — I hope there is something to approve."¹² One hardly knows whether Parker is thinking of his human or his heavenly father. And one is led to conjecture that if Parker thought of the Father God as a harsh taskmaster, it is small wonder that he prayed also to the Mother God of a more kind and forgiving nature.

This writer finds it hard to escape the conclusion that Parker was ridden with a terrific sense of obligation and guilt, and that his religion was one means of coming to terms with these feelings. It was his wont to write in his journal on the anniversaries of his birth and marriage. Again and

again the entries evince a great sense of disappointment with himself. For example, "I am thirty-six years old . . . There is not much I can commend in my life . . . I am somewhat disappointed in myself — not in my *reputation* — what men think of me . . . but in what I am,"¹³ or, "I am forty-two years old! I have done little to justify my parent's hopes for me."¹⁴

This sense of dissatisfaction and guilt, I submit, is largely responsible for the great activity and the early death of the man. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, his friend and one-time parishioner, reports that Parker studied between twelve and seventeen hours a day. He concludes, "To take the standard of study of a German professor, and super-add to that the separate exhaustions of a Sunday preacher, a lyceum-lecturer, a radical leader and a practical philanthropist was simply to apply a half-dozen suicides to the abbreviation of a single life . . . Theodore Parker's learning was undoubtedly a valuable possession to the community, but it was not worth the price of Theodore Parker's life."¹⁵

Parker's moralism not only lowered his own estimate of himself. It caused him to judge others harshly. There was a close relationship between what he considered to be the righteous life and one's more mystical beliefs. He felt his own faith to be that of absolute or pure religion by which all other faiths and religions were to be tested. It therefore followed that those who differed with him theologically were morally suspect. If the orthodox preached revivals, they were doing so to the neglect of the truly good life. If the Unitarians held to the evidence of miracles and the authority of Christ, they were implicated and at times charged with rum-selling and kidnapping. Parker's own congregation was made up largely of tradesmen, mechanics and the less prominent in society, while the merchants attended the older Unitarian or orthodox churches. Parker felt, therefore, that these churches might well be sanctioning all forms of economic oppression and immorality. Samuel Gridley Howe wrote him: "Why do you hammer away at the heads of the Boston merchants, none of whose kith or kin come to hear you, when the rest of the population of the city, and even many of the mechanics, were just as ready to back up the authorities for kidnapping men as the merchants were?"¹⁶ Parker in his own self-righteousness and in his utter failure to perceive distinctions, runs the charge of being something of a bigot in his own right.

Samuel Howe, incidentally, was probably the one stumbling-block in Parker's unquestioned faith in himself. Howe was a doctor, a reformer, a close friend of Parker's and his loyal comrade in the battle against slavery. Howe is a refreshing figure in any biography of Parker, for he appears to be one of the few people who loved Parker dearly and yet saw through him. Although he often went to hear Parker preach, he attended more regularly James Freeman Clarke's Church of the Disciples. Parker could

never quite understand this. In his absolute religion, morality and piety were inseparable. He and Howe shared a common moral imperative. Accordingly, in Parker's view, Howe should have found absolute religion as preached in the Music Hall the inspiration for his own devotional life also. But this was not so. He expressed dissatisfaction with Parker's religion as well as with the conduct of Parker's congregation. Howe said of Parker, according to an entry in the latter's journal, "His preaching is not religious enough for me."¹⁷ Parker added, "This is in reality the most painful criticism I ever heard made on my ministry . . . I never heard of anyone objecting to my preaching that it was not religious enough."¹⁸ Parker then lists the liberal views which offended people and drove them from his church, and goes on: "But who knows how many men have been grieved by the same thing? 'God help me to know myself that I may see how frail I am!' Surely, it would be a much greater grief to me to fail in the things which belong to the purely religious feelings than in any or all the others. Dr. Howe said that other men went down to the deep places of his heart more than I and gave him a glow of religion which I failed to produce. I confess the criticism surprises me for if there be any one thing which is strong . . . it has always been to me the *religious part of me*."¹⁹ Parker continues for four pages in his journal defending himself and listing the hardships and persecutions of his life. Some years later another such remark by Howe provoked a long letter from Parker. He began with the statement "I do not think very highly of my services religiously or intellectually"²⁰ and continued with a defense of his social, religious and political views. While continuing to be a good friend to him, Parker could never accept Howe's feelings; they disturbed and threatened him.

We now turn to Parker's intellectual life. This has been well documented elsewhere with ample illustration of his amazing powers of retention and organization. He read omniverously and almost omnisciently; his interests ran from botany to law, from Biblical criticism to the study of languages of which he knew many. There were perhaps two chief weaknesses in his intellectual habits. The first lay in the great amount of reading and writing which he did. He was so busy taking in information or spreading information about that he had little time to be creative and original. James Freeman Clarke speaks of "a too great rapidity of production."²¹ And William Channing Gannett claims that his first and last original work was the *Discourse*. It was his "Summa" and his "Institutes" and served as his theological system and guide for the rest of his life. His friend Higginson said, "One sometimes wished that he had studied less and dreamed more."²² This is an odd statement to make about a supposed Transcendentalist.

Another by-product of this terrific working pace was what Higginson called "a want of fine discrimination." He says, "No man can write for

posterity, while hastily snatching a half day from a week's lecturing, during which to prepare a telling Sunday harangue for 3000 people. In the perpetual rush and hurry of his life he had no time to select, to discriminate, to omit anything or to mature anything. Needing above all men to concentrate himself, he was compelled by his whole life to lead a profuse and busied life."²³ Parker, for example, preached against the current revivals as he might have against Jonathan Edwards in the Great Awakening. Yet these nineteenth century revivals were of a far more mild and appealing character with little of the "terrors of the Lord."

There remains to comment upon Parker's emotional life. He was a man who needed affection and needed to give it. The youngest of ten and the darling of his mother, he remembers, "It may be supposed that I was treated with uncommon indulgence and probably received a good deal more than the tenth part of the affection distributed."²⁴ The boy grew into a fun-loving, affectionate and sensitive man. Rufus Leighton, his friend and parishioner, recounts how, when he was home, the neighbors' children would come running up the stairs of his house, crying, "Parkie! Parkie!" He would invite them into his study, take some toys from a desk drawer, and play with the children on the floor. Charles Corey from Worcester met Parker on the train and sat with him from Albany to Chicago. He wrote back to his Worcester friends, "The conversations, carried on those days and nights, will never be forgotten."²⁵ Parker loved to sit and talk with his friends. Higginson characterized his conversation in this way: "He monopolized, not because he was ever unwilling to hear others, but because they did not care to hear themselves when he was by."²⁶ Parker was something of a dominating personality and a leader. But his leadership was in the realm of ideas, and not in the field of what is now called human relations. Higginson called him "a hard man to relieve or to help or cooperate with."²⁷ Parker enjoyed being the whole show. He founded the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* to succeed the *Dial* in 1847. The *Review* began with a promising corps of contributors, recalls Higginson, but "when it appeared that its editor, if left alone, would willingly undertake all the articles — scientific, historical, literary, everything — of course, the others yielded to inertia and dropped away."²⁸ The journal lasted a scant three years.

Parker's affection and domination are nowhere more evident than with his wife, Lydia. He was devoted to her and, true to his moralistic attitude, he made up a code of behavior for himself when they were married. The marital decalogue began with "Resolved: Never, except for the best causes, to oppose my wife's will," and ended with "To remember her affectionately always in my prayers."²⁹ He called her, most paradoxically, by the name of "Bear" and carried out the motif in a dozen gifts and objects about the house, including an ursine silver candlestick. He wrote poetry to her in

his journal and when she went for a trip, he wrote down, "I miss her absence — wicked woman! — I cannot eat or sleep or work or live without her. It is not so much the affection which she bestows on me as that which she receives by which I am blessed." ³⁰

Lydia seems to have been the ideal wife for such a strong-minded man. A friend wrote posthumously about her: "She had not much expression and seldom took an active part in conversation . . . a quiet and undemonstrative disposition . . . But she was devoted to him . . . She adopted his opinions . . . [and] made the pathway of domestic care . . . easier for her husband to walk in . . . It was through her means and good management that he was left free to do his work without the burden of debt and embarrassment upon his shoulders." ³¹

The great tragedy of their lives was that they never had children. Parker often alluded to this in his journal and in letters to friends. The poignancy of his loss may be seen in the following little catechism which he once jotted down in a sadly fanciful moment:

What creature is this? A bear.

What sort of a bear is it? The very best sort of bear.

What shall it do to be saved? Have cubs.

Which, alas! the poor Bear did never accomplish. ³²

It is indeed an odd twist of fate that Parker who needed people to love him and whom he could love, had a nature that was often harsh and unsympathetic. It was ironic that he who spoke for the benefit of the public good should do this so often in a personally insulting manner. He made private enemies of theological opponents, and his sarcasm offended even his closest friends. Higginson reports, "I confess that I have often felt inclined to criticize a certain caustic tone of his in private talks." ³³ James Freeman Clarke took him to task for taking quick offense at a fancied slight in regard to a pulpit exchange between them. Many years later Clarke remarked, "Such extreme severity . . . defeats its own object; for it is felt to be excessive and unjust. I cannot approve of Theodore Parker's severity. I consider it false, because extravagant; unjust because indiscriminating; unchristian because relentless and unsympathizing." ³⁴ Even Horace Mann, Parker's partner in many projects of reform, said of his criticism of General Winfield Scott: "Will the good gained by making a man out worse than he is repay the evil? Mr. Parker has been so much wronged himself, that he should be careful about wronging others." ³⁵ Samuel Howe with his refreshing perspective wrote to Parker in 1854: "How lucky it is that there are evil institutions and wicked men in the world for you to assail and belabor with your iconoclastic hammer, or you would have smote the good . . . Dear Parker, do try and restrain that inborn spirit of destruction — be a little less conscientiously and intellectually

charitable and more emotionally and heartily so.”³⁶ “The fire of anger and scorn is ill-concealed beneath the covering of sorrow — of *intellectual* sorrow . . . I tell you, dear Parker, you need to cultivate most diligently and earnestly ■ spirit of gentleness and tolerance. No matter if you could not and would not kill robins when a boy — that does not prevent you from being fierce and destructive when a man.”³⁷

One might well argue that such aggressiveness and harshness were necessary in the work of opposing such a gigantic evil as the institution of slavery. But, as I see it, this hostility participates in Parker’s immense oversimplification of the issues and in his distortion of the complex truths which lie behind all moral issues. There were no grays or half-tones in his life — only truth and error, righteousness and evil. Parker considered himself to be unfailingly the champion of truth and righteousness. History has proved him nearer the right, but only nearer. Slavery was an absolute evil to him and he fought it as such. But Parker never lived to see the great test which finally ended slavery. Would he have opposed it in the same way, had he suspected that the South *would* fight and had he known the price in lives and destruction which the North and the South would have to pay?

Parker’s lack of sympathy and discrimination were also evident in his attitude toward what he felt to be meaningless forms and rituals.

The Lord’s Supper [he wrote] . . . is a *heathenish* rite and means very little, I think. Let all who will come into a parlor, and have a social religious meeting and eat bread — wine if you like, or curds and cream — baked apples, if you will; and have a conversation, free and cheerful, on moral questions. . . Only let all be rational and real.³⁸

In reference to those who practised the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper Parker was not hesitant to quote the lines of Pope —

Behold the child by Nature’s kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight —
A little louder, but as empty quite.³⁹

Later he defended the use of these lines in a letter to his parishioner, Mrs. Caroline Dall: “I never *mocked* at anything. I am not aware of uttering contumely or reproach . . . I am not conscious of having written one line with any unchristian feeling. I knew that I should be misunderstood, misrepresented and abused.”⁴⁰ Parker always assumed that he was persecuted because of the rightness of his own views and because of the stupidity or malice of his opponents who could not accept the truth when they heard it. He shows a complete lack of consciousness that his own sarcasm, scorn and hostility might have earned him quite as many enemies as his own noble social and religious views. In all things he protests his own christian charity and his own righteousness. He writes again to Caroline Dall, defending his attack upon the Boston Association: “I know I speak only in a

good spirit, in a spirit *wholly good* . . . I am confident that what I say is true. As to taking pleasure in saying what you call sarcastic things I never felt the least pleasure — no — nothing but pain.”⁴¹

It should be emphasized that Parker had to deal frequently with a powerful and, at times, unkind opposition. The orthodox prayed for God to put a hook in his jaws so that he could not speak, and his brother Unitarian ministers refused to exchange with him. On the other hand, it must be stated that much of the persecution and intolerance extended toward Parker was stimulated by his own persecution of and intolerance toward others. He was never conscious of the effect of his own harshness upon others. He found it hard to believe that those who differed with him could be honest and sincere. And so he developed a sense of being a maligned and persecuted messiah — a sense that sometimes bordered on paranoia.

He was fond of thinking of himself as the most hated man in the United States. We encounter this thought in his *Experience as a Minister*; in a letter to Dr. Convers Francis of Watertown;⁴² in his diary,⁴³ and in a letter to Dr. Howe.⁴⁴ Parker delighted in magnifying his opposition and thus increasing the sense of his own importance. Howe wrote to him in December of 1855: You “suppose that individuals and classes have you in mind when they say and do things, and they speak and act in reference to you, while, in reality, they do not think or care about you . . . You speak of ‘the hatred, loathing, and contempt’ with which the Unitarian ministers regard you. This is rank injustice . . . they do not think or care about you so much as you suppose they do . . .”⁴⁵

It is from these strong, dramatic features of his personality as well as from the originality of his theological views that Parker developed a new kind of ministry. Practically speaking, Parker followed the lines of his new and broader ministry, because he wanted to have a hearing for his views outside of his small parish in West Roxbury. According to his sermon record book, his pulpit exchanges dropped from an average of forty-five a year to five after his South Boston sermon. Parker wrote to his old friend, Dr. Francis, that if he could not obtain a normal hearing in an ordinary church, he would “go about and preach and lecture in the city and glen, by the roadside and fieldside, and wherever men and women may be found.”⁴⁶ And this is practically what he did.

It was through the institution of the lyceum lecture that Parker found his hearing — and lost his health. He lectured thirty times in 1844 and reached a high of ninety-eight appearances in the winter of 1855-56. He visited every Northern state and during the later years of his life spent the whole of many weeks traveling and speaking. This task took a great toll of his health. The late hours, the poor food, the cold railroad cars and hotel

rooms, and the continual strain of reading and speaking only aggravated his consumptive condition. James Freeman Clarke tells of meeting him on the cars. Parker had a carpet-bag full of old vellum-bound books. He would travel most of the night, read the books during the day and lecture upon them at night, doing this for four or five nights a week. He would return to Boston, says Clarke, "with the carpet-bag exhausted and the whole substance of those books in his brain . . . On Saturday morning he would sit down to write his sermon for the next day; on Saturday afternoon he would visit the sick and the bereaved of his society. On Sunday morning preach his sermon and in the afternoon drive over to Watertown to preach there; and on Sunday evening he would lie on the sofa, tired out and talking to his friends."⁴⁷ His lecturing schedule took him far and often from his own church; but it was another means of disseminating his views and he felt a loyalty to the general public as well as to his own congregation.

His practices of calling and parish care were equally outgoing and indiscriminate. One might say they were an extension of his own quick feelings of compassion. He performed private services for any who made the request. He loved weddings and refused to take a fee when two friends were joined, saying it was the happiest day of his life. Although sick and ailing, he refused to take a weekend vacation in New Hampshire when a Negro woman asked him to perform the funeral service for her son at that time. A man whose young bride had passed away and who had been driven from popular theology asked Parker to take the funeral service. Later, he said, "Mr. Parker did not speak as if he believed, but as if he knew."⁴⁸ Ednah Cheney, a parishioner, recalls how Parker visited a paralytic for many weeks, bringing her the flowers from the Sunday service. She describes how, in the midst of the excitement of the slave case, he came to visit a sick girl. She also recalls his remark that "the parochial relations taxed him more than any in all his work."⁴⁹

Perhaps for this reason the majority of calls in Parker's life were made upon him. He recounts two particularly busy days at the Exeter Place residence. During one day he received a Negro seeking financial aid; an orthodox minister from Ohio seeking five thousand dollars to build a free church in that state; a clergyman desiring to talk about the Zoroastrian doctrine of immortality; Silas Lamson complete with full beard and white robe displaying two machines to facilitate ploughing and spading. He then went out and made two or three calls, returning to receive a parishioner who stayed until nine at night, when they lit gas for the first time in that house. Parker added "so the light of the house and the light of the heart burn at the same time."⁵⁰ On another day Parker received a steady succession of callers, including George Ripley and Ralph Waldo Emerson, from morning until eleven at night. These interruptions could not but bother Parker in

his pressing schedule of reading and writing; yet, from all accounts, he was a gracious, sympathetic and helpful listener.

Parker also maintained a voluminous correspondence with all manner of people. Octavius Brooks Frothingham in his biography has a chapter of eighty pages devoted to specimens of these letters. We find in them advice, consolation, offers of financial assistance, remonstrance, planning on some literary or reform project, and some friendly exchanges. Parker was a man who poured out what he had — be it money, compassion, rebuke or suggestion. The President of Harvard College had a standing invitation to refer to Parker any needy and deserving boy for financial assistance. Parker wept with those that wept and rejoiced with the joyful. His correspondence with Patience Ford, a religiously-minded young woman of Dorchester, affords rich illustrations of his pastoral manner. He exults with her in their common sensing of religious truths and feelings. He sent her a book by Fenelon and one by himself. He sympathizes with her on the death of her mother, but reminds her of new responsibility to her family. He explains to her a more gentle Christology than he was wont to preach publicly. He invited her to his home for conversation. When she talked too dreamily for his practical mind, he warned her of the dangers of becoming lost in contemplation. When she began to think of living the life of a religious recluse, he said: "I hope you will not mistake any transient impulse which has its origin in physical derangement for a serious monition to lasting duty."⁵¹ He instructed her in his theology and received her constant praises without comment. In 1841 she wrote him, "God has sent you, Sir, to be a savior and I doubt not that many a soul thro' the length and breadth of the land could echo back the sentiment."⁵² Toward the end of their correspondence in 1851 Patience Ford became more and more mystical, and the practical Parker last wrote her with a long harangue on the error of a popular theology which absolutized evil in the form of Hell and preached an imperfect God.

While Parker held an allegiance to the general public, his first and special love was his own congregation, the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston. It was never a church in the usual sense. It was Parker's church — his spiritual property and his audience. After the South Boston sermon Parker was refused pulpit exchanges in Boston and neatly cut away from participation in the Thursday lectures. On January 22, 1845 a group of men met at the Marlboro Chapel and voted: "Resolved: that Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston."⁵³ The Twenty-Eighth Society was the result of this meeting and resolution. Parker had his chance to be heard and the people in Boston had a chance to hear him. But it was always "Mr. Parker's church." The covenant read, "We, the undersigned,

hereby signify our desire to join the society worshipping in the Melodeon under the instruction of Rev. Theodore Parker.”⁵⁴

The congregation was a motley group, tradesmen, grocers, mechanics, some Negroes, and many others, young and old, men and women — all of whom had one thing in common, a disappointment with the then-popular theology and an intense interest in hearing what Parker had to say on Sunday mornings. The bulk of them had little interest in the church as an organic entity. Except for occasional voluntary offerings for the poor, the seats were free. A devoted core of friends met the expenses of the hall rental and the minister's salary with their contributions. They also maintained what business organization and administration were necessary to run the Society. There was a benevolent committee which administered the moneys collected for the poor. Parker assayed the superintendency of the Sunday School, but a few months experience proved this to be a failure. A course of lectures on the New Testament proved to be too dry to attract a sizeable group. Parker ran a class for young women on Sunday afternoons which proved only mildly successful. Another Sunday afternoon class was a discussion group which broke up very soon because of the usual hecklers and radicals who monopolized the conversation. All these activities were only incidental to the one important event which brought congregation and preacher together — this was the Sunday morning sermon.

In many ways the Music Hall, into which the Society moved in 1852, was hardly a fit setting for a service of worship. It was a large hall whose main floor and two narrow galleries seated three thousand people. Forty-two doors admitted people to the hall. At one end rose a stage about five feet from the main floor. A small desk stood upon it with two vases of flowers at each end of the desk. A small group of chairs were placed closely around this desk for the benefit of the inner core of supporters and disciples.

The attitude and participation of the congregation was hardly more conducive to a devotional spirit. Samuel Howe wrote in his diary, “At Parker's meeting individuals read the newspapers before the exercises begin. A good many persons come in after the prayer, and some go out before the conclusion of the sermon. These irregularities offend my sense of decorum and appear undesirable to me in the religious education of my family.”⁵⁵ At times, the sound of the doors slamming from the arrival of latecomers or the departure of the impatient broke harshly upon the sermon or prayer. The congregational participation in the service was little and weak. It was generally agreed that Parker read the hymns a great deal better than the congregation sang them. One can easily sense the religious void in this dull hall and amidst this miscellaneous congregation.

This void was filled by an ordinary-appearing man with a beard and gold-rimmed spectacles. “His appearance is that of a plain farmer or

schoolmaster and there is an entire absence of display in his style," said one newspaper.⁵⁶ Said another, "As the popular standard goes, Mr. Parker has few or no charms. His voice is level and monotonous. And yet there is a certain winningness of manner which attracts and gratifies the hearers. He certainly has no graces of oratory."⁵⁷ And yet, this undramatic speaker had a power of thought and language which captivated his audience. Higginson says, "His mere elocution was sufficient to produce effects which melody and grace and beauty might have sighed for in vain."⁵⁸ Thackeray, on hearing him in the New York tabernacle, found him "full of fire and earnestness, quite refreshing to listen to."⁵⁹ Another Englishman who heard him in the Music Hall wrote back to the *Liverpool Northern Times*: "What force! What far-reaching thought and clinching argument in single sentences! . . . His sermons are written but he scarcely appears to read, and his actions seem to arise wholly out of the fervor of his eloquence. Sometimes his hand comes down with terrific force, but it is always accompanied with corresponding thoughts and words. In illustration of a passage he had occasion to pluck a water lily . . ."⁶⁰ Parker's extemporaneous gift appeared again one winter, when the snow slid away from the roof of the Hall with a great roar. Parker remarked, "Before the true man all obstacles will slide away like the ice from the slanted roof."⁶¹ Much of Parker's strength as a speaker derived from the power of his language. He used hearty Anglo-Saxon words, and employed images and illustrations from the fields and streets of New England. James Russell Lowell paints perhaps our best verbal picture of Parker the preacher:

There he stands looking more like a ploughman than priest,
If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at least,
His gestures all downright and same, if you will,
As of brown-fisted Hobnail in howing a drill;
But his periods fall on you stroke after stroke,
Like the blows of a lumberman felling an oak,
You forget the man wholly, you're thankful to meet
With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street.⁶²

And yet for the importance of these sermons to the congregation, they tended to be redundant and very broad. This was due to two factors. First, Parker spent so much time lecturing that he had only a hurried Saturday morning to spend on the preparation of his sermon. While he could use much of the information which he had been gathering and giving forth during the preceding week in that Sunday's sermon, the message itself did not have time and occasion to deepen, mature or change. Secondly, Parker was influenced by his congregation. Higginson tells us that on each Sunday there were about one-quarter of the congregation who were newcomers and visitors, who might probably never hear him again. This, plus his rapid production of work, led Parker to preach a broad, definitive sermon

every Sunday. The strangers must hear his views on every topic — theology, slavery, the press, trade laws and women's rights. Like an Oriental poem, in Higginson's phrase, the sermon began with the creation of the universe and touched all subsequent events. He adds, "It is astonishing to look over his published sermons and addresses, and see how under many different names the same stirring speech had been reprinted."⁶³ The illustrations and statistics changed, but the sermon remained essentially the same. His congregations may have affected Parker in another way. Being made up of the radicals and the disaffected of society, they may have encouraged Parker in his criticism of social ills and in the asperity with which he uttered these criticisms. Howe writes to him, "You are unduly and unhappily petted and encouraged to be thinking and saying sharp and cutting things . . . I have not said one half enough . . . to convince you of a besetting sin in which some of your friends encourage you — uncharitableness of thought and word."⁶⁴

Perhaps nowhere did Parker's own religious life shine through more clearly than in his conduct of public prayer. And nowhere did he appear to be more of a mediator than here. Many testimonies bespeak this. "It was good only to see Mr. Parker in his church on Sunday . . . It made us all know that he felt the presence of God. We saw it in his face so full of stern joy as he led us in our prayers."⁶⁵ Or, "I knew that whatever the week brought I could bear it, if I heard his prayer on Sunday."⁶⁶ Again, Julia Ward Howe remarked that the published volume of his prayers, "cannot convey any sense of the sublime attitude of humility with which he rose and stood, his arms extended, his features lit up with the glory of his high office. Truly, he talked with God and took us into the divine presence."⁶⁷

It is quite obvious that Parker was the center and cohesive force in the Twenty-Eighth Society. His physical presence was the altar and his spoken word was the doctrine of that church. The covenant contained his name. In turn, the Society gave Parker a chance to spread his views and to fulfill his sense of mission. It could only follow by virtue of the logic of this symbiotic relationship that the Society could not survive without Parker.

On January 19, 1859, a Sunday morning, Parker failed to appear at his accustomed seat behind the desk. Deacon John Manley came to the platform and read a short note, beginning "I shall not speak to you today; . . . I had a slight attack of bleeding from the lungs and throat."⁶⁸ Dismayed, the congregation expressed their regrets in a formal note and voted to continue Parker's salary. Discussion followed as to who should fill the pulpit in Parker's absence. A Mr. William Spanwell prophetically proclaimed, "Mr. Parker was *the person* whom the congregation wished to hear and that with any others the congregation would dwindle away until

few were left. He would advise closing down the church . . .”⁶⁹ Another man protested against this, saying, “To surrender would look like worshipping a man and not obeying a principle. He would have the ideas and principle of Mr. Parker preached by others.”⁷⁰ The majority favored this latter speech and arrangements were made to procure interim speakers.

Parker went to Santa Cruz as an invalid. Failing in health, he sent his resignation in, but the Society refused to recognize the inevitable and would not accept it. It was not until two years after Parker’s death that the Society voted to seek out another minister. During the subsequent twenty-eight years the Society engaged four ministers whose combined tenure totalled less than seven years. The prophecy of Mr. William Spanwell rang true. No one could take Parker’s place at least in the minds and hearts of this congregation. Shortly before the second minister resigned, the clerk recorded that “the practice of providing other speakers to alternate with the pastor had proved successful so far as attracting larger congregations . . .”⁷¹ The congregation found it difficult to decide on a minister, and the Pulpit Committee could not agree on the powers a minister should have. Most of the time the Society heard such speakers as John Weiss, William Gannett, Samuel Longfellow, Wendell Phillips and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The Society was forced to leave the Music Hall in 1863 because of the construction of a new organ there, and they returned to the Melodeon. Just three years later they had to leave that place and so moved to the rooms of the Parker Fraternity on Washington Street. With each move and with the erratic schedule of preachers and speakers the congregation dwindled, the financial contributions correspondingly. Oddly enough, the Society maintained a more active parish life than it ever had during Parker’s lifetime. We read from the minutes of a meeting on April 6, 1888: “The Science Class has been as successful as usual. The Social meetings have been the feature of the year. The Standing Committee recommends that the monthly services be continued except for the months of June, July, August and September.”⁷² But in December of the same year we read: “Voted: that the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston will no longer use the Parker Memorial Meeting House for religious purposes. Adjourned. Fred H. Henshaw, Clerk.”⁷³ That is the last entry in the book and, as far as we know, that is the last meeting of Mr. Parker’s Society.

For all intents and purposes the Society died in Florence with Parker in 1860. The institution was only an extension of the individual. It was his charismatic presence, as much as his theology, which united this congregation. Other preachers were spreading the doctrines of Parker across the country; there was no need for one organization to stand symbolically for these now-accepted truths. The church and the man marked an important

milestone in religious history. Like all milestones they showed the people of the age where they stood, and pointed them on a new direction. And like all milestones they were surpassed by others.

NOTES

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THEODORE PARKER AS REVOLUTIONARY MORALIST: FROM DIVINITY HALL TO HARPERS FERRY*

BY TRUMAN NELSON

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Transcendentalism, that mystifying but regenerating revolution of the conscience, had its tap root in Emerson, one of the most inconsistent and ideologically capricious of men. He often disclaimed it, often irritably said that it was impossible to define as an element like bread or salt, and cynically equated it with self-conscious martyrdom. Yet this frail reed, Transcendentalism, generated a striking force during the thirty year span of its vibrant life which gave authoritarian religious dogma a flogging from which it never recovered. Transcendentalism went on the attack against the so-called Liberal Church, against the State as interpreted by Henry David Thoreau, against the profit system as interpreted by George Ripley at Brook Farm, against imperialist war as interpreted by Theodore Parker at the time of the Mexican adventure, moved with force and violence against slavery, the United States Courts and the Constitution when it reached its apogee as the Higher Law ethic of the 1850's, and had its Gotterdammerung in the blood and doom of the assault by John Brown (a true transcendentalist, Thoreau called him) on Harpers Ferry, which, again according to Thoreau (who should know whereof he spoke), made the North "suddenly all transcendental."

The test pattern of any "ism" consists of the arguments it throws out to get adherents. Emerson's Divinity School Address of 1838 seems to be his best instrument for recruitment of transcendentalists, and Parker's South Boston Sermon is his best effort to gain continuity for the movement. Although these discourses are as unlike as the men uttering them, they deal directly with the new cause and by revisiting them both it may be possible to understand why, although Emerson was the founder of this new form of revolutionary morality, Parker was its prophet and redeemer.

Emerson's Address, with the fragile beauty of its beginning, the evocation of the tenderest and most transitory blessings of nature on man, should be too well known to have to synthesize here. But its highly aesthetic tex-

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ture often blinds the reader to the real power that throbs beneath its flawless skin, its laying down of the law that knows no law, the revolutionary morality which proclaims that "he who has the Lawgiver may with safety not only neglect but contravene every written commandment."¹ It was with this address that Emerson abdicated his own role in organized Unitarianism, to endow the world with secular masterworks, but it is still rather tragic that after having laid down the forms for its regeneration he broke them up in himself.

To the young graduates awaiting their turn at the preaching desk he gave the dismaying word to cast aside historical Christianity, saying that nothing they had learned was actually relevant to their careers. The religious sentiment could not be received secondhand: it was not instruction but provocation that one man required from another. A man was comic or pitiful when his individuality was defiled by the mere accumulation of ritualized fact: ritualism prevented him from being, as he should be, his own Providence, dispensing good and evil to himself. Christianity, as they knew it, was an oriental tyranny, the prevalence of falsehood. The preacher's vocation, which was to convert life into truth, was corrupted in the church unless he used it to deal out to people his own life as passed through the fire of his thought, without dogma or the insulation of fixed rites and ceremonies. If the unhappy man could not stand upright in his pulpit, giving out the wine and bread of life as felt in the daily revelations of his own personality, then he was doomed to cowardice and shame. What then was to be done? Why, redemption was to be sought in the soul . . . the old was for slaves . . . where *men* come, there comes revolution! They should go it alone, cast behind all conformity and live with the privileges of the immeasurable mind, wherein lie all the resources of astonishment and power.

It was a beautiful utterance, but it was a valedictory, and only a man leaving the pulpit forever could have stated it with such juridical firmness. It was all very well to cast off form and texts in the promise of continuous revelation, but it had absolutely nothing to do with that sermon deadline of Saturday night. But the havoc the Address wrought with formal pulpit technique was nothing compared to the doctrinal wrath its dangerous thoughts provoked. Emerson was almost immediately dragged onto the pillory of the public press, damned as a heretic and a blasphemer, and the Address declared a gross offense to the Divinity School and its faculty. These were not idle words: another such dissenter, Abner Kneeland, had just spent sixty days in the common jail for remarks only slightly more contemptuous than Emerson's of the established forms of worship, printed in an avowed free thought periodical, "The Investigator." Emerson had been so incendiary as to deliver his heresy as the last instruction to innocent boys going forth as Christian ministers. It made a searching investigation of all its circumstances highly imperative. The consensus in the Unitarian

hierarchy" was that those inviting him (a student committee) were accessories to the commission of a crime and owed the public whatever exculpation they could muster. A candidate approving this address and then presenting himself as a Christian minister would be guilty of a falsehood, and there was no telling what disastrous effect he would have on the morals of a community.

In the baleful light of the Abner Kneeland case in which on April 2, 1838, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that "to destroy the veneration due God, although no words of malediction, reproach or contumely were coupled with His name, is an offense,"³ it seems incredible that Andrews Norton and Henry Ware, Jr. could have denounced Emerson as they did without being aware that their charges might involve the guilty party in the coils of the law. Some of their attacks reflect the very words of the condemning court. Henry Ware, Jr. stated that Emerson's remarks seemed to him to deserve the charge of atheism.⁴ Andrews Norton, making four separate onslaughts in the newspapers,⁵ flatly accused Emerson of infidelity, blasphemy and of "rejecting all belief in Christianity."⁶ The peril was heightened by the knowledge that Abner Kneeland himself was no atheist, claiming everything in the material universe to be of the substance of God — a position not far from Emerson's — but that this had not mitigated his actionable criminality.

Henry Ware, Jr. did some curious maneuvering in two letters he wrote Emerson. In the first, of July 6, 1838, he appears to be urging Emerson publicly to recant, saying that the prevalence of some of his ideas "would tend to overthrow the authority and influence of Christianity."⁷ But instead of recanting the heretic firmly replied on July 28 that although he had been pained by the knowledge that some of his statements would cause dissent among his friends, his conviction of the substantial truth of the doctrine of the discourse was still unchanged and it appeared to him important that it be spoken. Henry Ware, Jr.'s reply of October 3 got down to a single point on which he apparently wanted Emerson to commit himself, i. e. "by what arguments the doctrine 'the soul knows no persons' is justified in your mind?"⁸ This was the phrase which most irked Ware, which seemed to him arrant atheism.

Emerson's answer to this entrapment, written October 8, seems strangely craven for a man of Emerson's proven courage and defiance, and completely at odds with those sentiments in the Divinity School Address whereby he urges his hearers to "rise refreshed on hearing a threat, . . . demanding not the faculties of prudence and thrift, but comprehension, immovableness, the readiness of sacrifice."⁹

He, first of all, expresses dismay that he has been raised to an object of criticism by such good and wise men. He calls himself a chartered libertine, free to worship and to rail but utterly incapable of organizing a methodical

sequence of controversy. He does not deserve the notice of such "masters of literature and religion." He is unwilling to be a polemic; he could not give an account of himself if challenged: "I could not possibly give you one of the arguments you cruelly hint at, on which any doctrine of mine stands. For I do not know what arguments mean in reference to any expression of a thought." ¹⁰

It is these astonishing reversals, these wanton acts of polarity, which make Emerson the enigma of American letters. It is hard not to accept this as a obvious failure of nerve. Who can believe that a man telling Divinity School graduates that their theology dwells with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus did not feel the weight of the cross he was carrying? The surface language in these letters is of the highest quality of brotherhood and even affection, but the iron is underneath nevertheless, and Emerson the radical was doubtless aware, as many a radical is today aware, of the friend-denying frenzy with which a "liberal" will denounce him in order not to suffer from some past association or relationship. In any case, he said goodbye to all this, and it might well have been the end of the movement in terms of the church but for one young man who heard the Address with rapture. "So beautiful, so just, so true and terribly sublime was his picture of the faults of the church in its present position" wrote Parker in his journal, and from then on he simply and boldly lived out, with all his faculties, the dangerous and sacrificial injunctions laid down by Emerson.

We see in the ordeals of Theodore Parker what might have happened to Emerson if he had replied to his public humiliation not with peace, but with a sword. Parker had been preaching at the little church in West Roxbury for about a year. He was trying out, like a medical experimenter giving small doses of a lethal substance to build up anti-toxin, the new heresy on his former congregation and seeing "men's faces looking like fires new stirred thereat." It was Parker's good fortune to begin his ministry where matters of exegesis were not of much importance. He worked with the farmers in their fields and knew them as men and so had fallen instinctively into preaching a religion of which he himself had inward experience and which was reflected in the constitution of the men listening to him. Here he had the advantage over Emerson who had left his first (and last) congregation over a doctrinal question. Parker was enormously gifted, intelligent to the point of genius. He was ambitious, and restless and constricted in this small compass. After hearing Emerson at Cambridge he took some sermons full of dangerous thoughts, laid by in a drawer, and exploded them in the West Roxbury torpor in hopes of attacking a wider audience. After a series of minor explosions, he was given a chance to unlimber a full cannonade three years later at the ordination of Charles Shackford in a sermon now famous as "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity."

Although there is no evidence that Parker knew the contents of Emerson's letter to Henry Ware, Jr., his salvo had an uncanny relationship to the answer Emerson might have given to the anti-transcendentalists if he had chosen to hold the fort instead of lying low in the power of the Lord. Parker had made a careful survey of his opponents' works; he told many people of Henry Ware's entrenched position, which was to tell his pupils that if ever there was a contradiction between their own reasoning and the letter of the Bible they were to follow the written word: "For you can never be as certain of what takes place in your own minds, as of what is written in the Bible. Preach Christ and not yourselves and never appeal to human nature for proof of doctrine but to the authority of Revelation."¹¹ The towering citadel of Andrews Norton's dogmatism had been visible from all quarters of the theological world, built on the foundation that no man could gain evidence of God and immortality by observing nature or the ordinary course of events but must receive these truths from those who had examined all the evidence — like Andrews Norton. Persons attempting to deal publicly with such arcane matters should first put their ideas into the hands of men capable of judging their correctness — like Andrews Norton. Only flatulent, ignorant notoriety-seekers like R. W. Emerson laid claim to direct intuitive perception of God's will and substance.

It was on this massive target that Parker trained his fire. This sermon is often spoken of as inferior to Emerson's and to many of his own. To me this is not so; Parker may be an acquired taste but once you have mastered the rhetorical complexities of his long line and driving rhythms, a diction rarely consciously literary, ideas that do not inveigle but fall on the ear with the demoniacal clang with which the greatest composers enslave their listeners, you will find him at the very peak. He puts you so completely between the hammer and anvil of his discourse that you are willing to surrender after the first ten minutes, but he goes on and on in surges of stately motion, in an unflagging beat which accents material of such spaciousness of outline that its unvarying tempo adds to, rather than detracts from, the accumulating power of the headlong rush of words. Unlike Emerson, he often uses expression of deliberate coarseness, like horns in dissonance, giving a rampant masculinity to his style. Hear this, for example, from the South Boston Sermon: "The stream of Christianity as men receive it has caught a stain from every soil it has filtered through so that now it is not the pure water from the well of life that is offered to our lips but streams troubled and polluted by men with mire and dirt."

The substance of this sermon, assaying it purely as a counter-attack on the anti-transcendentalists, was that although Jesus believed his religion to be eternal, some bad men and some good men today believe Christianity to be obsolete (here he seems to be speaking directly of Emerson), feeling that religion itself is to pass on to a higher, more personal and subjective

form. He goes on to develop his first theme, that although Christ said his word would not vanish he had left it merely as a word and not entrusted it to any form or institution carried on by men. Parker affirmed the eternity of these words and contrasted them with the impermanence of things: fortresses, cities, empires which have long passed into dust. Christ's idea of life was still viable, formal Christianity uncertain and perishable. The differences between its opposing sects at the moment was greater than that between Jesus and Plato in the beginning. All forms and doctrines known as Christian have been as fluctuating as pagan ones and they have crossbred. Yet, because man is a reflective being, there must be some philosophical framework attached to religion, but it must be a true form, as the outward facts of nature and the solar system are true to themselves and never change in substance or relationship. Then Parker begins to bear down on the Andrews Norton faction, "Everyone begins to play the philosopher out of the small treasures of his own fancy . . . authority is taken for truth and not truth for authority . . . men have been burned for professing what others have been burned for denying . . . an idolatrous regard for the imperfect scripture of God's word is the apple of Atalanta, which defeats theologians running for the hand of divine truth . . . opinions respecting the nature of Christ are constantly changing . . . for some ages the Catholic Church seems to have dwelt on his divine nature, leaving the human element to mystics and other heretical persons whose bodies served to flesh the swords of orthodox believers . . . Now it seems clear that the notions men form about the origin and nature of the scriptures respecting the nature and authority of Christ have nothing to do with Christianity, except as its aids or adversaries: they are not the foundations of its truth."¹²

All this, Parker said, was the transient in Christianity; the permanence came when it was realized that "Christianity is a simple thing, very simple. It is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion; the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance. The only form it demands is a divine life, doing the best thing in the best way from the highest motives . . . with nothing between us and the Father of us all . . . the relation between man and man, and man and God, with the duties that grow out of that relation, are always the same, and can never change until man ceases to be man and creation vanishes into nothing."

The hue and cry of heretic started up again. The most evil and strenuous attempts to punish Parker began. His name was coupled shrilly and incessantly in the press with atheists and blasphemers. The sins of Abner Kneeland were reviewed; the Attorney General was called on to prosecute, the grand jury to indict, and the judge to sentence Parker to three years in the State prison for blasphemy. His parishioners at West Roxbury were approached and urged to cast him out. Other ministers with few exceptions

refused to exchange with him and he was saddled with the melancholy chore of writing a hundred and four sermons a year for one hundred and four simple farmer folk who loved him but did not understand him, and all the fruit of his consummate learning and genius had to fall on barren ground.

He went to publishers but, because his enemies got there before him, they refused to publish his works; at every turn of the road he was blocked until they finally had him cornered in that total isolation and exile from the intellectual community which is the modern-day counterpart of the *auto de fé* for heretics. Still this did not break him; he wrote and managed to get a few things into print, privately. When the sharpshooting did not entirely silence him, an organized effort was made by the Boston Ministerial Association. He was summoned and formally accused of having written a book subversive of Christianity and being a disloyal and dangerous Deist. The Reverend Chandler Robbins put the question bluntly, "Since Mr. Parker finds the feeling against him so general, I think it is his duty to withdraw from the association."¹³ Parker said No, I am not going to sit tamely and be driven out of my position by the opposition of some and the neglect of others. I should not thus answer the purpose of my life but only execute the plans of my enemies. I shall leave the pulpit when a free voice and heart can not longer exist there and then I will go and live and study with Ripley at Brook Farm and four or five months in the year I will go about and preach in the city and by the side of the road wherever men and women can be found, and make this land ring, and if this New England theology, which cramps the intellect and palsies the soul of us, does not come to the ground, then it shall be because it has more truth in it than I have ever found.

This holding action was brave but it cost him his health. He had to go to Europe to restore himself. When he came back another official attack opened up. A minister who had invited Parker to exchange pulpits, the Reverend John T. Sargent, Minister of the Suffolk Street Chapel, was fired from his church for this hospitality. Parker excoriated the men who did this, the so-called Liberal Christian church. It was a clear case of guilt by association. He accused them of aiding and abetting the expulsion of Mr. Sargent "for positive misprision of heresy," which consisted of his fellowship with Parker. He taunted them with their reluctance to formally expel from their association the archheretic, himself. They had already shut him out of the last pulpit in Boston by doing away with the Great and Thursday Lecture. He challenged them to fight the matter of Orthodoxy out with him in the open arena. They knew his views, let them publish theirs so that there would be a clear field before them for the struggle. "Gentlemen, you are men of leisure," he taunted, "and I am busied with numerous cares; you are safe in your multitude of council, while I have comparatively none

to advise with. But notwithstanding these advantages, so eminently on your side, I have not feared to descend into the arena”¹⁴

There was no formal answer to this and the controversy was settled on one side by the adoption of certain obligatory tests and creeds to screen out any future Parkers from the Association. On the other side, enough people became wrought-up about Parker's plight to come forward and offer him a chance to be heard in Boston on his own. It was then his life of heroism and grandeur really began in a meeting house made of a shoddy little theatre where he could glance down during his prayers and see the lost spangles of the Saturday night dancing girls still glittering on the floor. There he became united with a congregation like the puritan ones of old who chose their teacher and stood by him through all the fires of Smithfield. But they, like his West Roxbury farmers, really cared little about the validity of his doctrines in the theological sense, and because the basic stance of his preaching allowed perfect freedom, not demanding all men to think alike — but to think uprightly and get as near as possible to the truth, he began to get away from sterile disputes on this and that form of dogma and to speak intuitively from his conscience. He had been well tempered in the hot fires of controversy. Unlike Emerson he did not surrender an inch to Andrews Norton and the anti-transcendentalists. At every attack he turned with a snarl and went for Norton's jugular vein. “Did you notice,” he wrote, “Norton's remarkable mistranslation of German passages? They are such as a Tyro would make. He must have got his great knowledge of German Theology by being ignorant of the language . . . that is, by absolute intuition.” Pedants seldom attacked him twice. Lowell wrote of him in his “Fable For Critics,” “He bangs and bethwacks them, their backs he salutes with the whole tree of knowledge torn up by the roots.”

But his prime function now was to organize a coherent conscience in his congregation. He knew all his victories over pedantic disputants meant nothing if they took up the time needed to explore with his own people the pressing and accursed questions plaguing society. Of what use was all this windy fray over whether religion was intuitional or sensational if it did not act to reduce immediate human suffering? The questions that less gifted ministers had been asking both him and Emerson from the beginning remained unanswered. “Without forms and texts, where is the Sermon? Now that you have obliterated the transient, where is the permanent?”

Parker's oblique answer to this, and, to me, the hard core of revolutionary transcendentalism, comes in his great sermons of the 1850's. There has been an unfortunate emphasis placed on the separatist-quietist phase of Transcendentalism as crystalized in Christopher Cranch's poem “Enosis,” “Thought is deeper than all speech/Feeling deeper than all thought/Souls to souls can never teach/What unto themselves was taught.” This is the

Transcendentalism which petered out when the dream became a battle. This is supposed to represent the art-side, the permanent part of the movement. There is nothing further from this self-orbed futility than the poetry which came streaming from Parker like the living waters from the rock struck by the rod of the prophet, when he stood at his desk on the fateful morning of September 22, 1850, to define "The Function and Place of Conscience in Relation to the Laws of Men." There is no higher art outside of Shakespeare and Milton, to my mind, than the soaring passages in this sermon as he attempts to extract from his congregation their pledge that they will resist all inhumane commandments, from King Ahab to Millard Fillmore. Here is only one of them:

This we need to remember:
That nothing in the world without
Is so sacred as the eternal law of God:
Of the world within nothing is more venerable
Than our own conscience, the permanent, everlasting
Oracle of God.
If I am constantly and continually false to this,
It is of no avail that I seem loyal to all besides;
I make the light that is in me darkness, and how
Great is that darkness.
The center of my manhood is gone,
And I am rotten at my heart.
Men may respect me, honor me, but I am not respectable.
I am a base dishonorable man, and like a tree,
Broad-branched and leafed with green,
But all its heart gnawed out by secret worms;
At some slight touch one day,
My rotten trunk will fall with horrid squelch,
Bringing my leafy honors to dishonored dust,
And men will wonder that bark could hide
Such rottenness and ruin.¹⁵

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required that escaped slaves be given up to their masters under laws as bindingly pro-slavery to the North as any in the deep South. It posed the legal compulsion that was the ultimate test of Transcendentalism. Were these men who preached or wrote so ardently about the need to cast aside formal law when it came in conflict with their consciences to serve their theory with acts, or would they ignore the whole matter? Parker gave visible proof of his intent by lining up a dozen or so fugitive slaves on his meeting house platform and daring the law to come and get them. "There are some things that are true," he said, "independent of all human opinion. One and one are equal to two. The earth moves around the sun. All men have certain natural and unalienable

rights which a man can only alienate for himself and not for another. What is the fine of one thousand dollars and the jailing for six months to the liberty of a man? My money perish with me if it stands between me and the eternal law.”¹⁶

This defiance was specifically addressed to the President of the United States but it was backed up by a passionately loyal and responsive congregation. Moving after this to the Boston Music Hall, his last meeting house, and regularly filling its 2,700 seats on Sunday, he became deeply involved in a plot to free the slave Anthony Burns by a violent attack on the Boston Court House; a fiasco in which a deputy sheriff was killed and which resulted in Parker missing, by a hair's breadth, being indicted for murder or treason or both.¹⁷ As it was, he was indicted for a misdemeanor, along with Wendell Phillips, a beloved neighbor and friend. He then wrote such a corrosive attack on the judges who were to try him that, in my opinion, after reading it they saw that the case was quashed shortly before coming to public trial, and a possible glorious martyrdom for him. But however useful Transcendental theory was in stirring people up the highest planes of action from principle, it cast a debilitating and whimsical confusion over action itself.

But it should not be felt that Parker's energies were directed only to the anti-slavery struggle. He went forth to do battle with every form of spiritual and physical degradation imposed by an unconscionable society on mankind and womankind. The righteous told him he stabbed everything he touched — religion, Christianity, respect for government. “Still they all live after their deadly wound,” he said. “Think of me, hated, shunned, hooted at, not a half dozen ministers in the land but they abhor me, call me infidel. I have no child and the worst reputation of any minister in all America. Yet, take it all together, I am a happy man.”

He had good reason to be, for in the revolutionary decade beginning in 1850, he did what few men in all the world have ever done, created, for a short while, a whole new faith, fused some dreamy abstractions with reality and made transcendentalism itself an overpowering force for human liberation.

Parker was tubercular and the agonizing strains of his life and work, taking the leap of Niagara, he called it, began to shred away his titanic vitality. Around 1857 he became so ill that the Orthodox clergy began praying in relays for his death as a sign of God's judgment on his wicked ways. At this time there came into his life, so tenuous now, a form of certainty in the person of old John Brown, a Calvinist revolutionary who was the physical embodiment of the natural law which Parker felt had to be invoked in favor of the slave, to free him and free the nation from the falseness and hypocrisy of its position. He became one of the famous Secret Six who gave Brown the principle means with which to attack

slavery with force and arms on the soil where it existed and to achieve a victory like that of Samson tearing down the obscene temple of the damned.

His restless spirit came to rest in Old Brown, somehow he was able to shift his emotional burden onto Brown's shoulder and resolutely leave Boston, on a journey of uncertain duration, to try to get back his health. He went to the West Indies, then to Switzerland, then to Rome but it was all an ebbing and a dying; at every stop on the way he found himself nearer to extinction. But he never stopped working. He constantly studied and prayed for a religion which would answer the totality of the conscious need of man, and a theology which would explain to him the eternal structure of the real universe. In Rome he preached his last great sermon in the form of a letter in defense of the man sentenced to die on the gallows for his assault upon Harpers Ferry. This transcendent utterance was one of four great king posts of principle which have held up the eternal rightness of John Brown's sacrifice against all the winds of calumny and distortion directed against the old Puritan. The other defenses were fashioned by Thoreau, Emerson and Wendell Phillips, and they were virtually the only ones to defend him.¹⁸ It is significant that three out of the four were avowed Transcendentalists and the fourth a Calvinist of such purity that he represented that moral juncture where Calvinism and Transcendentalism touched hands.

Parker's defense of Brown was bold, vigorous and final, resting on five revolutionary affirmations. 1. A MAN HELD AGAINST HIS WILL AS A SLAVE HAS A NATURAL RIGHT TO KILL EVERY ONE WHO SEEKS TO PREVENT HIS ENJOYMENT OF LIBERTY. 2. IT MAY BE THE NATURAL DUTY OF THE SLAVE TO DEVELOP THIS NATURAL RIGHT IN A PRACTICAL MANNER, AND ACTUALLY KILL ALL THOSE WHO SEEK TO PREVENT HIS ENJOYMENT OF LIBERTY. 3. THE FREEMAN HAS A NATURAL RIGHT TO HELP THE SLAVES RECOVER THEIR LIBERTY, AND IN THAT ENTERPRISE TO DO FOR THEM ALL WHICH THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO DO FOR THEMSELVES. 4. IT MAY BE A NATURAL DUTY FOR THE FREEMAN TO HELP THE SLAVES TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THEIR LIBERTY, AND AS MEANS TO THAT END, TO AID THEM IN KILLING ALL SUCH AS OPPOSE THEIR NATURAL FREEDOM. 5. THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY IS TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE FREEMAN'S POWER AND OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THE SLAVES.¹⁹

After this he failed suddenly and begged to be carried out of that city of darkness with almost his last breath, shaking his fist at the Pope's boundary post on his jolting ride to the free city of Florence. He died there in 1860, his body ruined, his heart charred by the execution as a traitor of the man who exemplified best for him the revolutionary morality of his grand-

father who fired the first shot on Lexington green. Parker lies buried there in Florence; the green seas have rolled for a hundred years between him and us who love him; his spirit is rooted precariously in this harsh New England earth: it needs nourishment.

Emerson must have felt his life coming full circle when he came to Parker's meeting house in 1860 to give another valedictory; this time to the passing of the one man among his listeners that refulgent summer day in Cambridge who did as he was told: who stood in the pulpit and dealt out the stuff of his life for his congregation and his country. Parker had always claimed himself a Transcendentalist but Emerson, even in his eulogy of the man who had just died too far away from the green grass and the transparent darkness of the New England summer, made no attempt to claim him for the cause he had begun. He talked only of Parker as he was, of how he had discovered that men's opinions are organic to them, and of how men came to him, Parker, because they found their opinions, expressed by him, far stronger than they could have said it themselves, in all causes of love and humanity. Parker's people came to him to hear him speak against outrage in the hour that it was committed with the power of a Luther, a John Knox. They came to him because he could take from their anxious hearts the silent reproaches that lay against them for letting injustices to others slip by without a rebuke for the public crime. By the incessant power of his statement Parker had turned an indignant minority into a party which was even now forming to finish what the brave old man at Harpers Ferry had begun. But most of all, Emerson must have thought how *this man* had shown everyone who had ever known him that Duty is one with Science, with Beauty and with Joy.

NOTES

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Miscellanies* (Boston, 1856), p. 326.
2. Embracing, among others, Andrews Norton, Henry Ware, Jr., E. S. Gannett, N. L. Frothingham.
3. *20 Pickering's Reports* (Boston, 1839), pp. 206-246.
4. J. E. Cabot, *Emerson* (Boston, 1887), p. 338.
5. O. B. Frothingham, *Theodore Parker, A Biography* (Boston, 1874), p. 106.
6. Cabot, *op. cit.*, p. 335.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 689.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 691.
9. Emerson, *The Divinity School Address* (Boston, 1948), p. 21.

10. Cabot, *op. cit.*, p. 693.
11. Theodore Parker, *Experience as a Minister* (Boston, 1859), p. 55.
12. Parker, *The Transient and Permanent in Christianity* (Boston, 1908), pp. 18-19.
13. Frothingham, *Parker, op. cit.*, p. 166.
14. Parker, "A Letter to the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers touching certain matters of their Theology," *Saint Bernard and Other Papers* (Boston, 1911), p. 116.
15. Parker, *The Slave Power* (Boston, 1910), pp. 311-312.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
17. Cf. Truman Nelson, *The Sin of the Prophet* (Boston, 1952).
18. Ruchames, ed., *The John Brown Reader* (New York, 1960), pp. 282, 296, 299.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 256, 257.

THE INFLUENCE OF PARKER ON EUROPEAN THOUGHT

BY F. C. DEVRIES
Wormer, Holland

Translated from the Dutch by Tjerk J. de Vries

On May 10, 1960 it is one hundred years since Theodore Parker, the great thinker, preacher and reformer, died, exhausted through the terrible illness for which there was no remedy at that time, after seeking recovery in the Antilles, but also in Europe.

It goes without saying that the man who worked with so much love and devotion in West Roxbury and Boston and from there in a wide circle will be commemorated with gratitude and reverence in his country. But also outside the United States there are those who venerate and commemorate Theodore Parker as a high-souled friend. That does not mean that nowadays Parker is generally known in Europe or in theological circles. His free pioneering mind, which undauntedly sought after truth, does not exactly blow with force, certainly not with us in Holland where the liberal religious movement tried to adapt itself to a renewed orthodoxy so that there is not much left of free speech.

When Prof. Dr. Smits lately said that he would suffer because of his own sins and did not want to shelter himself behind the suffering and dying of Jesus Christ, a charge was immediately made against him and he was suspended — it is true not as a professor but as a clergyman in the Dutch Reformed Church. However, the synod, the highest church government, quashed this verdict because of defects in the form. Of course the difficulties have not been overcome by this action, only circumvented for the time being. I mention this fact in order to make clear that the Liberals here do no lie on a bed of roses.

For this very reason it is good to recall to mind the heroic clergyman from Boston, who even now can inspire people to be themselves without halfheartedness and fear. In Holland you find friends of the Unitarians and certainly also of Theodore Parker among the members of the Zwingly association, which publishes a twice-monthly publication edited by the Rev. H. van Lunzen at Odoorn. It is written in essentially liberal Christian spirit and it says emphatically at its heading: "At the same time organ of the Dutch Unitarians." However the association is not numerous. Most of its members belong to the Dutch Reformed Church as long as this church

can yet tolerate and suffer such liberals. In 1961 it will secure the right, according to new regulations, to expel heretics !

On January the eleventh last I had the pleasure of delivering a speech about the life and work of the famous Boston clergyman to a circle of more than twenty theologians, presided over by Prof. Dr. Bleeker, assembled in Amsterdam from all parts of the country. This address fell on fertile ground, although this does not mean that all those present agreed with Parker in all respects. But all of them were impressed by a heroic man who, working extremely hard, risked his life to serve justice and truth. I have submitted this lecture to the theological magazine, *Theology and Practice*, in order to get Parker's name known in even wider circles than that of the liberal reformed bond, that all liberals may be inspired by his great example.

I also wrote an essay about the opponent of slavery which will be published in several provincial newspapers so that Parker will also be known and honored by the great mass of the people.

That Parker was esteemed by the "modern" believers of the last century in our country appears from the fact that the founder of the "Free Parish" in Amsterdam, Rev. P. H. Hugenholtz, Jr., more than twenty years after the death of the American clergyman quotes Parker as many as sixteen times in a "devotional anthology for our time" !

The founding of a "free parish," consisting of members of the Reformed Church, reminds us of Parker's founding the Twenty-Eighth Society of Boston indeed.

The important book through which the Dutch made acquaintance with Theodore Parker during the last century lies before me — *The Life and Works of Theodore Parker*, from the French, by Albert Réville, Arnhem, 1866. I suppose that the above Rev. Mr. Hugenholtz was the translator. The author, however, was a Frenchman, a professor in Paris, who died in 1906. Réville says in his preface: "It has always seemed to me that I was fortunate as an author, when I, by means of the most suitable magazine, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in the issue of October 1st, 1861, could draw the attention of the great mass of the people to the excellent clergyman with the Unitarians in Boston, Theodore Parker. It is true, his name had already penetrated into many a theological circle but especially outside America his reputation was not by far in proportion to his merits. Since the publication of that article many signs of the increasing interest in the thoughts and the character of this really admirable man appear everywhere on the horizon." You see how Parker could win the hearts of the people !

His thoughts also penetrated into French Switzerland. In this century it is especially Prof. Jean Schorer, clergyman at the cathedral of Geneva, who keeps fresh the memory of his great colleague from Boston. In 1947

he delivered four lectures in the "Salle de Conservatoire" on Channing "the devout philanthropist" and on Parker "the courageous reformer."

Soon Parker was not unknown in the German language area either. And no wonder, for he corresponded with many German and Swiss people and was very much under the influence of the radical German theology. In order to get acquainted with the latter he had learned the German language, and the Rev. Francis let him hunt in his well-provided library where he found the works of Strauss, DeWette, Baur, etc. Yes, the Americans must not forget that Europe certainly had something to offer at that time !

In September 1843 Parker travelled to Europe on sick leave, but he did not allow himself much rest. He spent a great part of that year's leave with his learned friends in Germany, and in lecture rooms. Just beyond the German frontier in Basel, Parker met his friend and teacher Wilhelm M. L. DeWette, whose book on the Old Testament he had translated. How hearty was the reception !

Finally, the British Isles belong also to Europe, do they not ? And there also Parker's influence was noticable. I remind you of the fact that in London in 1863 the Weiss *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker* was published. Also in London in the same year was published the great *Collected Works of Theodore Parker* edited by Parker's faithful adherent and admirer, Miss Frances Power Cobbe.

It is one hundred years ago that this fighter died. But he has not been forgotten. In many places in the world he will be commemorated on May tenth in gratitude and admiration.

FREDERICK MAY ELIOT AS I KNEW HIM *

BY JUDGE LAWRENCE G. BROOKS

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association

It is presumptuous of me to speak to you on the subject of Frederick May Eliot. Many persons knew him longer than I. Others have known him better. Some, undoubtedly, could do a better job: I am thinking, for example, of Wallace Robbins' masterpiece delivered at the memorial services, February 20, 1958. It can be said, on the other hand, that I was in close contact with Frederick Eliot during the last sixteen years of his life and at a stormy period in Unitarian history, about which I can speak with first-hand knowledge. I can, of course, only scratch the surface, but I am going to try to make you see Frederick as I saw him — as a man, a writer, a preacher, and as President of the American Unitarian Association. To do this properly, I must begin with something of the Eliot background.

Frederick May Eliot was born almost seventy years ago in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where his father was minister of the Unitarian church. Frederick was the oldest of three children of Christopher Rhodes Eliot and Mary May Eliot, the other two being Dr. Martha May Eliot and Abigail Adams Eliot, both of them persons of distinction. I remember Frederick's father well. Like many of his generation, he wore a beard, which by the time I knew him was completely white. In his later years he lived near my parents on Francis Avenue, Cambridge, where he built a house on part of the estate known as Shady Hill, which was formerly owned by Charles Eliot Norton. My aunt, who considered herself more fortunate to live in Brookline, facetiously referred to this area of Cambridge as "Somerville Fringe." The same idea was expressed by some wag in the Harvard Lampoon, who said that Garden Street, which lies between Cambridge Common and Brattle Street, separated Cambridge Common from Cambridge Preferred. Frederick himself was also a Commoner, since he lived east of Cambridge Common, on Irving Street.

Frederick's great uncle was Samuel May and the May name meant much to him: he always signed himself Frederick May Eliot. Samuel May was a Unitarian minister, one of several of the May name who were Unitarian ministers. On the Eliot side, not only his father, but also his father's brother, Thomas Lamb Eliot, were Unitarian ministers. Thomas Eliot,

* An address delivered at the annual meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society, May 24, 1959 in the Hale Chapel of the First Church in Boston.

born in St. Louis, in his early youth sailed around Cape Horn. Later, he became minister of the Unitarian church in Portland, Oregon. He was one of fourteen children. He lived to be ninety-five years old, becoming one of Oregon's most distinguished and beloved citizens. He had eight children, one of whom, William Greenleaf Eliot, himself a retired minister, I met at the Biennial Conference in Portland some years ago.

Frederick's grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, went from New Bedford to St. Louis, Missouri in 1834, where he became minister of the Unitarian church and among his many other civic activities founded Washington University. General Sherman is said to have declared that he did more than any other ten men to save Missouri for the Union. His father, William Greenleaf Eliot, a Boston merchant, born during the Revolution, and a cousin of John Greenleaf Whittier, had married Margaret Dawes, the daughter of William Dawes and a cousin of the unsung rider and companion of Paul Revere. Incidentally, Frederick was a first cousin of the poet, T. S. Eliot, and a third cousin, twice removed, of Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard College. The point of indulging in this genealogy is to emphasize the stock from which Frederick Eliot sprang, and his Unitarian background, which later influenced at least two important decisions he had to make.

Frederick attended the Prince Grammar School in Boston, and the Roxbury Latin School, from which he entered Harvard College. He graduated with honors in 1911. His academic interest, at that time, was government. For a short period he was assistant to Professor William B. Munro, whom some of you will remember. He received a traveling fellowship and went abroad to study the governments of European cities.

Had it not been for the Reverend Samuel McChord Crothers, it is quite likely Frederick would not have entered the ministry. This is where his Unitarian ancestry undoubtedly came into play. It was a good background for the persuasive Dr. Crothers to argue for the ministry. At any rate, instead of continuing in government, Frederick entered the Harvard Divinity School, from which he graduated in 1915.

Following his ordination as a Unitarian minister, he became assistant, for two years, to Dr. Crothers at the First Parish Church in Cambridge. In 1917 he was called to Dr. Crothers' old church in St. Paul, Minnesota. There he remained, with the exception of a few months when he was chaplain in the armed services, until called to the Presidency of the American Unitarian Association twenty years later.

Frederick loved St. Paul and its people, and his parishioners loved him. It must have been a great wrench to leave this happy, peaceful, yet stimulating atmosphere to take up duties so utterly different in the comparatively stodgy East. I can say this, having lived most of my life in Massachusetts

but also, at different times, having enjoyed the hospitality of St. Paul and other Midwestern communities. Why did he decide to return to Boston?

While Frederick was still in St. Paul, Unitarians became concerned over the obvious lack of progress of Unitarianism in the United States. The denomination appeared to be existing on a glorious past, certain prelude to decline. To forestall this, the American Unitarian Association in 1934 created a Commission of Appraisal, and appointed Frederick May Eliot its chairman. He took the assignment very seriously. When, largely as the result of his fine work as chairman, he was called to the presidency of the A. U. A., he felt it his duty to accept the call. It was as if all his Unitarian preacher ancestors spoke to him and bade him carry the Unitarian banner. It was a challenge in a time of crisis, which a man of courage could not refuse.

Before taking office, Frederick wrote two articles for the *Christian Register*, "The Command is Forward" and "Unitarians Face a New Age," both of which were clarion calls to action.

At the May Meetings in 1941, he spoke these fighting words:

"The day has come for the Unitarian Church of America to cease being merely an aggregation of separate and highly individualistic units, with no clear and definite sense of unity, no central purpose that compels obedience and loyalty, no common faith that creates a living fellowship of believers, no discipline that makes common action possible, no sense of a holy vocation so that God's own purposes and grace may become incarnate once again in human lives and transform the face of the earth. We must be done with all that theorizing and temporizing which, in the name of freedom, will leave open the gates of the citadel to her bitterest enemies, bent on her destruction. The time has come to create the Unitarian Church as a close-knit working and fighting fellowship of men and women who love liberty so passionately that they will unite in her defence, who would serve God in the present world at any cost to themselves, and who are not afraid to speak and act as though they knew themselves to be servants of the Most High."

History records the results of his Presidency. During the twenty years of Frederick's incumbency, adult membership in the denomination increased 75%. Church School membership almost trebled. In the last ten years, forty new churches have been established, over two hundred fellowships have been organized, of which a dozen have become churches (included in the forty). Indeed, to use a current expression, the Unitarian population has "exploded" and the machinery, more especially the American Unitarian Association, has been hard pressed to meet the challenge with ministers, buildings and other services.

These twenty years brought an increasingly heavy burden upon Frederick. He it was who had to trim a thin budget to match income to expenses. It meant spreading Unitarian resources which, though doubled in the above period, were inadequate to cover the field. It meant letting valuable men and women go to other activities more generous in their scale of compensation.

It was largely because Unitarian activities and demands were not being adequately serviced that Frederick three years ago initiated the Unitarian Development Fund campaign, so-called to raise between three and four million dollars, not as endowments, but to be spent during the next ten years to relieve the immediate financial stringency in practically all Unitarian activities in order to put the denomination in a position to capitalize effectively on the great upsurge in Unitarianism.

My intimate contact with Frederick began when, at the invitation of William Emerson, I became a member of the Executive Committee of the Unitarian Service Committee. This was at a time when it was literally rescuing Spanish liberals from death at the hands of Franco. Soon after, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association and shortly succeeded Charles O. Richardson as Chairman.

The Service Committee had been in active and exciting operation prior to this. It was the outgrowth of Unitarian relief activities in Czechoslovakia in 1938 in which Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dexter, Reverend John H. Lathrop and others had had an important part, with the full backing of Frederick Eliot and the Board of Directors of the A. U. A. The relief program was further expanded by William Emerson and Seth Gano, and became the Unitarian Service Committee. Frederick was a member of the Executive Committee until the U. S. C. became independent of the A. U. A. by vote of the latter's Board of Directors.

Frederick voted against the change. He was never reconciled to this independent status. He thought it was a poor administrative set-up. He felt that the Committee should have remained under the aegis of the Association. The subsequent, remarkably successful financial appeals of the Committee, achieved while the A. U. A. was struggling desperately to meet its own budget, did not help to reconcile Frederick to a situation which was so desirable for the Service Committee because its independence of the denomination enabled it to secure non-sectarian and government funds, otherwise beyond its reach.

Similarly, the creation of the United Unitarian Appeal complicated the financial picture of the A. U. A., thereby adding to the burden of the President. He always felt, and perhaps rightly, that the Association could have raised more money for its own operation outside of U. U. A. However, I myself believe that the denomination as a whole has benefited from the

independent status of both the Unitarian Service Committee and the United Unitarian Appeal.

While the Service Committee was still part of the American Unitarian Association, it came under strong attack from some Unitarians, as well as from other sources, for its alleged "pink" aspect. There was no doubt, for example, that the Committee was giving aid, among others to individual Communists in France. On the other hand, Communists had played an important part in the Resistance movement after the fall of France and both needed and deserved succor. This disturbed even intelligent liberals like Donald Harrington and A. Powell Davies, both of whom, I think, were unnecessarily exercised over the Service Committee's operations.

A part of this picture was the figure of Noel Field, who for a time was European Director of U. S. C. Roger Baldwin, at that time, was among the critics. He warned me that Field was a Communist. Having been educated in my profession to consider a man innocent until proved guilty, I asked Roger for proof, which he promised to supply. He was unable to do this, however, partly because persons who he thought would corroborate him did not allow the use of their names.

Throughout all this controversy, Frederick backed up the Service Committee. Then Noel Field retired as Director and, shortly after my wife and I had breakfasted with him and his wife in Geneva, he disappeared without trace, apparently kidnapped by Communist agents, just as his architect brother Herman Field was kidnapped about the same time. Many years later, both were released without explanation. Herman returned to the United States and told an extremely dramatic story, which some of you have perhaps heard from his own lips. Noel did not come back. Is he or was he a Communist? I don't know.

This period of Frederick's life as President of the American Unitarian Association was rugged. Stephen H. Fritchman was Editor of the Christian Register, I was Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Register. Fritchman was a brilliant and forceful editorial writer. He was thought by some people, particularly by the more conservative Unitarians, to be too partial to Soviet Russia in the columns of the Register. Charges were even made that he was a Communist. Frederick Eliot thought that, for everyone's sake, the critics should be given an opportunity to state their case and the Editor a chance to reply. Consequently, the Board of Directors of the A. U. A. requested its Executive Committee to inquire into the charges.

The Committee held a hearing in May of 1946 with the Editor and his critics present. By a vote of 7 to 2 the Committee exonerated Fritchman and by a vote of 5 to 4 retained him as Editor. In October the Board confirmed the action of the Committee but attached certain conditions to

Fritchman continuing as Editor, including a requirement that he submit material in advance of publication to the President and certain others.

This was, of course, potential if not actual censorship and Fritchman, not unnaturally, protested, but he went along with the arrangement for several months. Then President Truman, to prevent Greece and Turkey from being gathered in by the Soviet Union, proclaimed the historic policy of containment. Fritchman, thereupon, wrote a blistering editorial attack on President Truman and Senator Vandenberg for publication in the forthcoming number of the Register. It came to the attention of Frederick Eliot, Melvin Arnold, then Director of Publications, and myself. So vitriolic was the tone of the editorial that Fritchman, who meanwhile had gone to Oklahoma on a business trip, was asked by wire to consent to tone down some of the language. This he refused to do and he was subsequently suspended as Editor.

Fritchman took the matter to the Annual Meeting. Feeling ran high. At one point during the debate it looked as if the administration at 25 Beacon Street would be repudiated. However, the votes told a different story, and this particular controversy subsided.

There is no point in re-arguing the issues that arose in this controversy, such as the soundness of the Truman containment policy, the justification under conditions then facing the nation and our denomination, for restricting Fritchman's freedom of action as Editor of the Christian Register. It should be said that Frederick Eliot felt very badly about the affair. In a statement printed in the Register of June 1947, giving the reasons for termination of the Editor's services, he paid full tribute to his editorial ability and to what he had done for the Register. However, he never doubted, nor did I, the wisdom of the action taken.

There were other controversies. Frederick's connection with the Service Committee and his initial support of Fritchman brought another attack upon him by a local group of conservative Unitarians, known as the Committee of Fourteen. They were, for the most part, sincere persons, but not always too close to the facts. If the supporters of Fritchman represented the left wing of Unitarianism, the Committee of Fourteen belonged to the right wing. Just as Fritchman and his supporters went too far, so the Committee of Fourteen injured its case by unfair attack on Frederick Eliot and on 25 Beacon Street.

There was another element in this controversy. Not only was Frederick too liberal sociologically and politically for the right wingers, also, he was not conservative enough theologically. "Why," asked a well-to-do Unitarian, "should I contribute money to the American Unitarian Association, when, under the President's leadership, Humanist societies are being encouraged in those areas of the United States where Unitarian growth is most marked?"

On that score, Frederick made it plain, or tried to, that as President he had no authority to tell Humanists or anyone else what to think or preach, nor any power to expel them from the denomination, even if he wished to, and that, at any rate, he did not think it wise to discriminate against Humanists financially, if they were otherwise good Unitarians. Frederick, being a Humanist of sorts, was fairly persuasive along this line, except with those whose minds were closed on the subject.

Frederick had still another problem — himself. In the administration of Unitarian affairs, he knew what he wanted to accomplish, and what he wanted to accomplish he was certain was for the best interests of the denomination. Unitarians being Unitarians, Frederick's projects did not always have smooth sailing either in the Board of Directors or at the Annual Meeting. He tended to think opposition to his plans was personal to himself. Often I have known him to decline to speak for a proposal, saying that for him to do so would hurt the cause.

This was seldom the fact but it was easy for him to imagine. Opposition and criticism vexed him and he, not infrequently, showed his vexation. He was a bit too quick to interpret disagreement as deliberate unfriendliness. This super-sensitiveness on his part occasionally resulted in actual unfriendliness.

The tendency to take things too personally was equally hard on him and on those who, while disagreeing with him, wanted to be his friends. It gave him needless unhappy hours and created friction which need never have arisen. In some quarters it gave him the reputation of being unwilling to listen to argument.

The result of this sort of thing was two-fold. It alienated persons who would have otherwise been loyal friends and, by and large, supporters of his policies. It gave color to the charge made in places remote from 25 Beacon Street that Frederick May Eliot was a despot and the Board of Directors a bunch of puppets. In my position, I could see the absurdity of this charge, for while Frederick Eliot was a masterful personality, he was actually no more a despot than were members of the Board his puppets. In fact, he was inclined, so far as his relations with the Board were concerned, to consider himself the underdog.

On the other hand, coupled with this vexation was a willingness in most cases quickly to forgive and forget. Indeed, he would lean over backwards trying to erase feelings of resentment in other people.

Strong leaders produce strong reactions. Frederick was a strong man. On more than one occasion, toward the end of two of his Presidential terms, there were mutterings of protest, demands for a change. Under the By-Laws of the Association, it was the duty of the Board of Directors to nomi-

nate a candidate for President. A committee of the Board, appointed by the Chairman or elected by the Board, would canvass the situation. Customarily, the committee, through the Register, would invite suggestions for candidates for the Presidency. On the two occasions above-mentioned, the committee reported to the Board that they had received no suggestions of value and were unable themselves to suggest any candidate of the stature or capability of Frederick May Eliot. I can vouch for the fact that in neither case was the committee made up of persons particularly friendly to Dr. Eliot. The fact is that nobody cared to challenge Frederick's supremacy. When it came to a showdown he had no serious competitors.

Now what were the capabilities which contributed to Frederick Eliot's stature? To start with, he had a splendid inheritance, spiritually and morally. He possessed a superior intellect, which he constantly cultivated. He was executive by nature and enjoyed administrative work. His early life in Boston, followed by the twenty years in St. Paul, were an admirable combination which gave stimulus to an alert and inquiring mind. His retentive memory enabled him to store up what he read and heard. He had an unusual gift for public speaking. I never saw him read a speech or ever use notes. His prolific writings — books, pamphlets, articles in the Register, sermons and speeches — reflect his learning, and especially his intimate acquaintance with the Bible, whose language he often borrowed or paraphrased.

This is not the place to discourse at length on his writings. I do, however, want to quote a few passages to illustrate what and how he thought. For those excerpts, I am indebted to the painstaking labors and generosity of the Reverend Alfred Stiernotte.* Even a brief survey of Frederick's writings, from his earliest to those which appeared posthumously in the Register, reveal their literary quality, a forthright, pungent style and a wide range of subject matter. They disclose his philosophy of life, religious views, social vision, his broad international outlook, the objects of his admiration and aversion, or shall I say lack of enthusiasm. He had tremendous admiration, for example, for Albert Schweitzer, great affection for John Haynes Holmes. He certainly lacked enthusiasm for Reinhold Niebuhr and the Neo-orthodox school. He admired Dr. Pusey as President of Harvard University but deplored his attack on Charles W. Eliot, and his minimizing of Unitarian influence at the Divinity School and the Harvard Chapel, where he himself served so often as college preacher. While their views were in many respects divergent, for no one on the Board of Directors of the A. U. A. did Frederick have more respect and affection than for Percy Gardiner, for many years Treasurer and General Counsel of the Association.

* Mr. Stiernotte's compilation, *Frederick May Eliot, An Anthology*, has since been published by the Beacon Press.

Though liberal in his own religious views, he admired men in the orthodox camp, provided he thought them sincere. Among these were Bishop Oxnam and Pope Pius XI. Of the latter, he wrote: "Courage is no less appealing to the hearts of men everywhere when it is displayed by those in high places, and the courage which was the outstanding quality of Pope Pius XI, had won universal admiration long before his death. He was a mountain climber in his youth and something of the daring of the Alpinist was apparent in all his acts, even when he had to bid farewell to his beloved mountains and enter the self-imposed imprisonment of the Vatican. He never hesitated to speak the truth as God gave him to see the truth, and the instinctive response of the world, even of those who disagreed sharply with what he said, was prompt and whole-hearted. When he died his mourners included all who can recognize a brave man when they see him."

On the other hand, he resented all forms of orthodox coercion. There was a memorable meeting of the Board of Directors of the A. U. A., where the issue was discussed whether the Beacon Press should publish Paul Blanshard's book, "American Freedom and Catholic Power," which was much too hot a potato for any other well-known publishing house to handle. While the pros and cons of the issue were being argued in the Board, someone pointed out that in a city as strongly Catholic as Boston, feelings might well be aroused by Unitarian publication of a book so critical of the Catholic hierarchy — feeling which could easily be translated into hostile action, such as the sudden discovery by some city official that the fire escapes at 25 Beacon Street did not comply with the building laws. James R. Killian, then a member of the Board of Directors, who up to that moment had not entered the discussion, spoke up and said: "If there really is danger of that sort of thing, the sooner we know it, the better. I shall vote that the Beacon Press publish the book." Frederick Eliot, of course, stood with Killian.

Happily, the fear was unfounded and so far as I know, although some feeling was aroused in Catholic circles, there was no reprisal of any kind. I like to think that this was, in part, due to the fact that Frederick and I read the manuscript with great care and blue-penciled, with the author's consent, several passages we thought unnecessarily provocative.

With all his modern thought there was a strong Puritan streak in Frederick. In his more serious moments imagine him in Puritan garb and you could easily be carried back three centuries.

Yet, throughout the Eliot writings and speeches runs a thread of delicious humor which contrasts markedly with the austerity of his presence. His black eyes could twinkle with mirth as well as flash fire. In a sermon delivered in Chicago in 1928, referring specifically to his ministry in St. Paul, he recounted how two boys from the local high school came to see

him. They told him there was to be a debate on the Child Labor Amendment, that they were members of the Sophomore team and were told by their teacher that he would be willing to give them help. He told them he would be delighted and said, "I suppose what you want is to have me give you some of the arguments, either for or against the proposed Amendment." "Oh, no," they answered, "that isn't what we came for. As a matter of fact, we know all the arguments; what we want is a little help in the matter of gestures."

In a paper read before your society in 1946, "Tensions in Unitarianism a Hundred Years Ago," describing the uneasiness of John Quincy Adams and other conservative Unitarians of the day over the pronouncements of Theodore Parker and Emerson, Frederick said: "It [Transcendentalism] seemed mad enough to the merchant serving the purse — mad and explosively dangerous — but it was very much alive, as were the early followers of Jesus whom the respectable citizens of Jerusalem imagined were drunk. But who indeed is wise enough to be sure of the difference between new wine and the Holy Spirit."

I have referred to Frederick as a "Humanist of sorts." I say "of sorts" advisedly. From a sermon delivered in 1927, entitled "Humanism and the Inner Life," I quote briefly: "Among the practical tests of the value of a man's religion, one of the most important is its effect upon his inner life. Does his religion tend to build up that mysterious indefinable, but nevertheless intensely real, thing we call his soul; or, on the other hand, does it tend to break down those inner resources. Religion can work in both these ways and as a matter of fact it actually does, and I believe that until we know how a particular kind of religion meets this test, we have no sound basis for judgment upon its merits.

"This test seems to me more important than the test of intellectual correctness, for it is possible to get real humanizing values out of a faith that is intellectually discredited. And it is equally possible to have a faith which is thoroughly in line with the best modern thought and yet find that it does not make any appreciable difference in the strength of one's inner life. But an antiquated faith that fosters courage seems to me far preferable to an up-to-date faith that does not.

"Orthodox Christianity has worked in just this fashion for countless men and women in the past. It is so working for great numbers of people today. That is the reason for its continued strength in the world. But there is a growing company of people for whom it no longer works in that way.

"Does Humanism feed the souls of men? Does it foster that inner life that keeps them calm in the face of danger, resolute in the face of temptation, courageous in the face of defeat? . . . It is precisely because I believe Humanism can serve these human needs far better than any other sort of faith that I hold it myself and preach it from this pulpit."

Frederick believed profoundly that man is the master of his fate. On the other hand, unlike some Humanists, he did not exclude God from the pulpit or from his writings. While he conceded that his conception of the Deity differed from that of Moses, he constantly referred to the "Kingdom of God" and "God, the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe." But he proceeded on the theory that God helps those who help themselves. He believed in prayer as a means of cleansing and refreshing the spirit, but not as an instrument for influencing the Almighty.

In his little book of essays, entitled "Toward Belief In God," he makes it plain that he would not require any one to believe in God. On the other hand he recognizes the enormous advantage that a man has who can honestly accept God. From his writings and sermons, especially his "Prayers" published in St. Paul, one would not gather that Frederick Eliot's Humanism differed essentially from the religious views of the average Unitarian.

Consistent and correlative with all this was his faith in Man. In one of his radio talks, he said: "Only the free mind, to use a phrase from Emerson, is a candidate for truth. Underneath this preference for freedom rather than repose there lies what is perhaps the most characteristic of all the forms of faith among Unitarians — namely, faith in man.

"Our faith in man is wholly positive — so deep and vast in its sweep that it goes far beyond most of the philosophies and theologies of the past. Powerful in its hold of those that share it, strong to save men's souls from temptation and to inspire their hearts to sacrificial devotion. Once let it become the controlling factor in your life, once let it exert its sovereignty over your purposes and plans and conduct, and your life will be made over, your whole attitude toward experience lifted from the dark places of doubt and despair to the plains of light. This central faith is for Unitarians the power of God unto salvation."

In "Unitarians Believe," he has an eloquent passage on character, maintaining that the final test of a man's religion is character. "Unless religion develops character in men and women, it seems to us to be something less than religion and no matter what the other products and by-products may be, without character its primary purpose has been defeated and its chief value lost. Character is the foundation stone of all lasting human welfare. Without character, there can be no progress worthy of that name. Civilization becomes a mere delusion unless it is based on character in the people who create it and are responsible for it. The long record of history is the inescapable and irrefutable truth that when character fails, all is lost."

Because Frederick had faith in man he had faith in human progress at a time when the black shadow of Hitler and Nazism was threatening to engulf Europe. He said in a radio talk on "Progress of the Human Race:" "Step by step with painful slowness, in an advance that over and over again

is a matter of three steps forward and two steps back, step by step when you look at the story in the large, and survey the record as a whole, you can see that the gains outweigh the losses. The frontier of civilization is being gradually pushed back into the still vast areas of savagery.

“There are times when such faith seems to run counter to the actual course of events, when it looks as though the whole idea of progress is flatly denied by the facts of the real world. It may be that today we are living at such a moment. If so, there was never more need than right now for a clear, steady faith in man’s ability to find his way through the dark and tangled jungle of wrong, to learn how to hammer out on the anvil of bitter experience the tools which he can use to set free his own spirit. This is no time for bleak despair, no time for cowardly resignation, no time for surrendering our responsibilities and expecting God to intervene on our behalf. It is a time above all times for unflinching determination to keep straight on letting every failure teach the secret of a new success, unwavering in our faith in man’s onward progress — onward and upward.” This might be said of the world today.

Elmer Davis, the noted radio commentator, some years ago, delivering a Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard, said, apropos of the timidity in high places induced by the McCarthy investigations, “This country was founded by men of courage. It will not be preserved by cowards.”

During the second World War, Frederick was not a pacifist and he had little patience with conscientious objectors who refused to register in the Draft. On the other hand, he had much sympathy with those C. O.’s who, having registered, declined on principle to bear arms. He provided the opportunity for Unitarian conscientious objectors to get advice about their problems from responsible quarters.

Frederick was tremendously interested in what he called liberal religion. One reason was his apprehension of what he thought to be the growing influence of orthodoxy in the United States and Europe. Partly because of that he was greatly interested in the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom. The other reason was his awareness of the growing dissidence in orthodox denominations — a curious paradox. He knew that the actual number of Unitarians was not found in the church roster but in the hearts and minds of thousands of individuals who, though tied to orthodoxy by inheritance or for social reasons, yearned for a faith free from creed and dogma.

He expressed his views on this subject in an article in the Register of May 9, 1935, entitled, “The Essence of Liberalism,” where he wrote, “The essential thing about a Liberal is his confidence that on the whole, and in the long run, there is no safer guide for mankind than the light of human intelligence.

"The test of any man's liberalism is his refusal to employ coercion upon his fellow man, especially the more subtle forms of coercion. Above all he is resolved that in the realms of the mind and of the soul there shall be no compulsion so far as he can prevent it."

Again in 1937, in an address to the Oxford Congress of I. A. R. F., he declared, "Liberalism is a great faith or it is nothing — a great faith, strong, constructive, mighty to remove mountains and to overthrow strongholds, rich in the matchless energy of God as revealed in the great souls and genuine idealism of all human history. As the heirs of that tradition, as those charged today with its custody and its transmission, how can we dare to falter."

Because Frederick so earnestly advocated liberal religion for those capable of understanding it and benefiting from it, and because he wanted to marshall the liberal forces into a united group, he favored close union between all liberal faiths, especially between Unitarians and Universalists, but not excluding non-Christians. He would welcome liberal Jews, Hindus, Moslems, for example, into such a church. This breadth of vision dismayed some Unitarians who feared for the survival of our denomination in any such religious cosmopolis.

Frederick had a deep affection for the Unitarians of other lands — Czechoslovakia, Hungary and particularly Britain. He doubtless loved all Unitarians in the United States, at least theoretically. However, he became impatient annually with the number and type of resolutions submitted to the Business Committee of the Association, some of which he thought reflected small credit on Unitarian perspective and maturity.

He did not quarrel with the proposal to change the name of the Christian Register to Unitarian Register, indeed, he approved of it, but he deplored the unhappy remark by one of the proponents during the debate to the effect that "The less there is of Christianity, the better."

Similarly, over the years, he was critical of minority groups of Unitarians whose views and pronouncements he felt did not help the Unitarian cause. He expressed himself on this subject at the Annual Meeting in 1954 under the title "The Responsibilities of Minorities." Recognizing the right of dissent, he urged that this is only workable when accompanied by a self-imposed discipline of responsibility.

Frederick May Eliot's life was full and varied. He had time, in addition to other duties, to serve as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Mount Holyoke College and on the Boards of Proctor Academy and Hackley School and for a period, like his father before him, as Chaplain to the Massachusetts Senate. For forty years he was dedicated to the advancement of Unitarianism. He literally was a soldier in this cause and he did not spare himself. This involved his battling sometimes with the right wing, sometimes with

the left, and occasionally with both at once. His more difficult battles were with the conservative elements in the denomination. These encounters were harassing to his spirit. They made his constant struggle with financial problems more difficult because, as is frequently the case, the financial resources were with the conservatives. Their financial help was vital for the effective operation of the American Unitarian Association, but sometimes given not too generously.

All this and other labors took their toll of Frederick Eliot. I watched his jet-black hair grow white, and the furrows crease his brow. At times, so weary was he at meetings of the Executive Committee that he could only with difficulty keep his eyes open. It was a great shock, but not a great surprise to me, when word came of his sudden death. To conclude the metaphor of the soldier, Frederick truly died on the field of battle. You remember he was just entering the courtyard of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York to attend a meeting.

In closing, I cannot fail to mention two individuals who played an important part in Frederick's life — Elizabeth, his devoted wife, who provided an ideal domestic background for the accomplishment of his life's work; and Betty Buckley, who came to Boston from St. Paul a year or two after the Eliots' arrival, to become Frederick's secretary until her marriage to Richard Morse a few years ago. To all of us at 25 Beacon Street she was an extraordinary combination of efficiency and charm.

Finally I want to say that the added insight into Frederick's character and his service to Unitarianism, obtained by me as the result of preparing this talk, has measurably increased his stature in my eyes. He reminds me of Mount Washington, near the foot of which I have a place which I visit twice a year, and from which, each time, I return to work refreshed in spirit. As I drive down through the Ossipees I like to look back and see that splendid mountain apparently grow higher as I leave it behind. Frederick May Eliot's place in Unitarian history, as time passes, will, I am confident, assume increasing importance. Like the granite of the New Hampshire mountains, some of whose quality he shared, he is for the ages.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Story of the Second Church in Boston (The Original Old North) Including The Old North Church Mystery. By JOHN NICHOLLS BOOTH. Boston, 1959. 92 pages. \$1.99.

An urban church with a long and distinguished history needs to have a brief readable historical sketch to place in the hands of new members and passing visitors. Such an account must, of necessity, be popular in its approach and tell its story for a public who wants the human interest facts without the obtrusion of heavy documentation.

Dr. Booth has succeeded in telling a good story; his style is easy to follow and his captions are arresting and often original. The purpose of the narrative is obviously promotional; the chapters run along in sequence and conclude with "The Old North Church in a New Age," the final chapter in which it is stated that "this single church has survived three centuries of shattering conditions in human society because it has had the wisdom to learn, the strength to grow, and the courage to innovate. It remains a great institution."

In Appendix A, the author attempts to prove that the Revere lanterns were actually hung in the belfry of the meeting house of the Second Church and not in the steeple of Christ Church as tradition has had it these many years. There is some validity in raising the question, for the surviving evidence is sketchy and the steeple which is still standing is not necessarily the steeple or belfry from which the famous lanterns were displayed. The building of the Second Church was destroyed by the British early in the course of the Revolution, and when interest in the ride of Paul Revere was revived a century later, the legend attached itself readily to the graceful spire (already itself replaced twice since 1775) of Christ Church on Salem Street. In spite of painstaking triangulations of a professional engineer and an extended discussion of Revere's connection with the Second Church (he was actually a member of the parish of the New Brick Church in 1775), Dr. Booth has probably made few converts to his revised story of the hanging of the lanterns, for an established landmark does not readily give way in the minds of men to one long since passed from human sight albeit the cold facts of history may give considerable weight to the alternative tradition.

Although the promotional and popular approach may justify a somewhat journalistic and cavalier treatment of the subject matter, there is still an amazing number of erroneous facts, practically none of which, if stated correctly, would detract from the distinguished record of the Second Church. The second paragraph of Chapter One, for example, tells us that "one day in 1630 a group of Indians watched uneasily as the square sails of the *Arbella* slowly pushed the first colonists' ship into Massachusetts Bay and landed its passengers on the hilly peninsula of Shawmut." Who tells us that Indians were watching that day? Moreover, the first settlement was at Charlestown and not on the peninsula called Shawmut or later Boston.

It is also unfortunate in a serious piece of historical writing to refer to Lyman Beecher as minister of the Park Street Church (p. 29) or Robert C. Waterston of the Church of the Saviour in Bedford Street as Henry Waterson (p. 35) or John Greenleaf Whittier as a Unitarian (p. 36) in a list of seven avowed members of the movement.

One might also question whether the Second Church is, as Dr. Booth asserts, "older than any corporation, court or government in this land." The Massachusetts General Court, for instance, is both a corporation and a court and can trace its succession from a date some twenty years before the founding of the Second Church in Boston. Again, it takes a little proving to say categorically that "within its buildings has been unfurled *every* flag which represents a stage in our nation's growth — from the simple red cross of Old England to the present fifty-star flag of the United States of America."

In summary, it is probably fair to state that Dr. Booth's book should be used with caution and will probably be longest remembered for its revival on its title page and in an appendix of an old query regarding which is the *right* steeple. Nevertheless, it is easy reading and has some very interesting illustrations.

RICHARD D. PIERCE

Emerson College
Boston, Mass.

The Transcendentalist Ministers, Church Reform in the New England Renaissance. By WILLIAM R. HUTCHISON. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959. xvii + 240 pages. \$4.50.

No sooner had the dust begun to settle from the great "Unitarian Controversy" of the early nineteenth century than the newly emerged and identified Unitarians found themselves involved in a fresh internal argument revolving about the ideas of those who came to be called "Transcendentalists." "Pale" and "corpse cold" were descriptions applied by some of these men to Boston Unitarianism, though it might have given them pause to think had they heard Father Taylor, of the Seaman's Mission in Boston, defend his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson by saying: "He is a good man. He will have to go to heaven, because if he went to hell the devil would not know what to do with him. But it would take as many of his sermons to convert a man as it would take quarts of skim milk to make him drunk" (quoted from *Preaching Values in the Epistles of Paul*, by Halford E. Luccock, I, 193).

William R. Hutchison's book *The Transcendentalist Ministers* is a splendid study, emphasizing particularly the theology and practical parish life of the transcendentalist movement in New England. Moreover, it possesses the virtue of being highly readable.

One of the book's strengths is Hutchison's clear statement of the Calvinism against which the original Unitarian controversy was directed, and an equally clear statement of the "Unitarianism" which became the target of the transcendentalists. He makes the valid point that though the Trinity was a "nominal" point of contention with the orthodox, the "practical" disagreement lay in their respective estimates of the nature of man and his ability to contribute to his own salvation.

Hutchison's lively description of the transcendentalist assault on conservative Unitarianism (and a profound conservatism *did* exist simultaneous with Transcendentalism's advocacy of free dissent and inquiry) is a high point, as is his delineation of the *differences* among the members of the transcendentalist group. He points to their common "transcendental" emphases but makes vividly clear that these men were individualists, not to be bound by rigid typologies.

A strong Hutchison emphasis is the fact that "eleven of the seventeen clergymen in the original transcendentalist group remained all their lives [ministers], and that all but two had . . . careers lasting ten years or more" (p. viii). Religion was at the center of these men's concern and this not only in an abstract detached sense. Of great interest is the manner in which men like the erratic Orestes Brownson, William Henry Channing, Frederic Henry Hedge, Theodore Parker, and particularly James Freeman Clarke attempted to give body to their thinking in concrete parish situations, the net results falling somewhat short of "the church of the future," but challenging nonetheless. "We want an *instance*. We want a real example, an actual specimen, a church itself . . .," said Clarke in seeking to move beyond theory (p. 143).

A warning to contemporary Unitarianism is couched in Hedge's words, "The scope of the Liberal Church is large; but everything and everybody cannot be embraced by it . . ." (p. 141); ". . . a movement is strong by what it includes, an organism by what it excludes" (p. 136). Hutchison indicates that a continuing Unitarian problem has been to give principles of freedom an institutional form. It was the conviction of many in the nineteenth century that ". . . just as a free government must define citizenship, so Unitarians must candidly define a difference between being in the Church and being out of it" (p. 208). Have times changed?

The Transcendentalist Ministers possesses an excellent bibliography and succeeds in creating in one the desire to dig into it.

J. ARNOLD MEARDON

Melrose Unitarian Church
Melrose, Mass.

William Ellery Channing and L'academie des Sciences Morales et Politiques
1870: "*L'etude sur Channing*" and the "Lost" Prize Essay. By HESTER
HASTINGS. Providence: Brown University Press, 1959. 61 pages. \$1.50.

The international reputation of William Ellery Channing continues to interest scholars. Readers of these *Proceedings* may recall that the Channing bibliography printed a year ago included four items dealing with his impact on French and German thought. Such studies often reveal more about Channing's foreign readers than they do about Channing himself, but they are essential for a full understanding of what he stood for.

The monograph under review deals with a curious episode in the history of the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. It appears that in 1869, an "Etude sur Channing" was proposed for a prize competition. Two essays were possible contenders for the award, but neither qualified in its original form. After revisions had been made, the prize was divided. The essay of Félix Cadet, who was basically sympathetic to Channing, remained in manuscript until unearthed by Miss Hastings. The other, by René Lavollée, was printed; and Chadwick referred to it — inaccurately, Miss Hastings suggests — as "an enthusiastic tribute." It is, rather, a temperate critique by a Catholic whose conservative social and political point of view, as well as his theology, stood in the way of an understanding and acceptance of Channing's ideas on essential points. Since the purpose of the prize competition was to encourage the study of Chan-

ning as a spokesman for democratic principles and the elevation of the working class, it is ironic that the essay which finally appeared in print was the one the tendency of which was contrary to that original intention. Miss Hastings has not only told the story of this episode in detail, but has attempted a sympathetic reinterpretation of Channing with respect to the chief points at issue.

CONRAD WRIGHT

Harvard Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.

Professors and Public Ethics: Studies of Northern Moral Philosophers Before the Civil War. By WILSON SMITH. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956. 244 pages. \$4.00.

“Long exhibited but little viewed in the gallery of our intellectual history hangs the portrait of an isolated Harvard College, staffed with politically weak, even ethically obsolete, Unitarian teachers in the years of national crises before the Civil War. The picture does indeed show a condition of social and philosophical stagnation at Harvard with relative accuracy: its accuracy relates mainly to a severely critical viewpoint held then by some Northern reformers and by some later historians. Another, possibly fairer, test of its fidelity may be found in a comparison of the social ideas and actions of the Harvard moral philosophers — James Walker, Andrews Norton, Henry Ware, Jr., Francis Bowen — with those of other members of the profession throughout the North.” So begins the chapter in this book which deals with the Unitarian moral philosophers at Harvard in the pre-war period.

This doctoral dissertation considerably advances our knowledge of the ideas and public activities (and inaction) of the professors of moral philosophy in nineteenth-century America, thus taking its place in a rapidly expanding literature today on the social thought engendered in the American colleges before and after the Civil War. It traces the decline in influence of Paleyan theological utilitarianism (of the early part of the century) and the rise of various types of intuitive ethics which stressed the criterion of intention rather than that of consequences.

For the mid-century the book follows the rise and fall of what the author calls the “Whiggish morality” of the professors, a morality compounded of “middle-class civic propriety and gentility.” This “Whiggish morality” is delineated in chapters on John Daniel Gros, Francis Lieber, Charles B. Haddock, and Francis Wayland. Like the earlier utilitarianism, however, it was not able to maintain itself. Increasingly, these Whiggish moralists found themselves confronted and set aside by the evangelical Counter Reformation. The spirit of the Enlightenment was enervated by sclerosis from within.

In Unitarian James Walker the author finds “the end of the academic Enlightenment.” Walker was one of the first graduates of Harvard Divinity School, from 1839 to 1852 was Alford Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy and Civil Polity, and from 1853 to 1860 was President of Harvard College. In the author’s view, Walker,

precisely as representative of the academic Enlightenment, was incapable of coming to terms with the turmoils that issued in the Civil War or with the other social and political conflicts of the period. Unlike Andrews Norton and other Unitarian conservatives, Walker did to be sure promote the free discussion of the rising Transcendentalism. And, despite his "middle-class ideology," he rejected the notion that wealth is "the sole criterion of social respectability." At the same time his was "an individualist ethic of reason that tried to understand rather than to change the world"; and he was "conspicuously close-mouthed with regard to political issues." For him moral philosophy was "a contemplative device." Like most of the other professorial moralists of the period, he was more interested in the problem of the individual than in the structural problems of society as a whole. He "typified the Unitarian clergyman and Harvard professor who saw his role in society as essentially that of spectator, patient critic and conservator of the Christian, scholarly, and gentlemanly virtues."

One may nevertheless question whether the paragraph quoted at the beginning of this review is entirely adequate and fair. Walker was not on the side of social reaction. He insisted on freedom of inquiry and also on religious freedom. He gave no aid and comfort to the intolerance of Andrews Norton. After his retirement from the Presidency of Harvard to the Board of Overseers, Walker with James Freeman Clarke and Edward Everett Hale was co-author of the Report on education at Harvard which served partly as a basis for Eliot's transformation of the College. These things do not add up to "Unitarian stodginess" or to any other kind of mere stodginess or obsolescence. At the same time one must recognize, indeed one must insist, that Walker and his professorial Unitarian colleagues were by no means in the prophetic vanguard prefigured in Theodore Parker's realistic critique of American society as set forth in his sermons of the 1840's on social classes in a republic. The forces delineated by Parker would eventually bring the genteel tradition to bay.

Thus it would be erroneous for the reader of Dr. Smith's book to assume that the "Unitarian stodginess" he depicts at Harvard College is entirely representative of Unitarianism of the period. Nor is Theodore Parker the only and the unique sign of new life. In varying degrees of agreement and disagreement with Transcendentalism, Henry Ware, Jr., J. F. W. Ware (at Baltimore and at the Arlington Street Church), Frederic Henry Hedge of Harvard College, and James Freeman Clarke were, like many others, bent on the transformation of church and society. Henry Ware, Jr., of the Harvard Divinity School faculty was unusually alert to the social issues of the day, and one wonders why the author places him in the Harvard gallery of the "politically weak" and the "ethically obsolete."

Yet, Wilson Smith's book provides a needed antidote for the Unitarian who harbors the illusion that reason, tolerance and freedom, as interpreted by most of the Unitarian professors of the period, are sufficient to produce a worthy Unitarian hagiography.

JAMES LUTHER ADAMS

*Harvard Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.*

I Speak for Myself, The Autobiography of John Haynes Holmes. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959. 308 pages. \$4.50.

John Haynes Holmes is of the true race of prophets. One is tempted to read much into the fact that his grandparents (on his mother's side) were united in marriage by Theodore Parker, and were Parker's active supporters, and that his parents were married by the great Boston Universalist abolitionist and temperance preacher Alonzo Ames Miner. Holmes himself sees the inspiration for his entry into the ministry in the memory of Parker and in the quickening influence of Minot Judson Savage whom he heard as a boy at the Church of the Unity in Boston.

Holmes forms a link for us with these great pulpit orators of the past. It was his oratorical promise that motivated the people of the Church of the Messiah in New York to seek out the young preacher serving his first parish in Dorchester. Just three years out of divinity school, Holmes began the long ministry which was to transform the New York church into the Community Church which we know, and to make an important impact on the social and political life of the City, the nation, and the world.

The promise of great oratory was fulfilled. The pale imitation which is the modern sermon is not known in the Community Church. For Holmes, "A real sermon should be organized like a military campaign into an enemy's country, with an array of ideas 'as terrible as an army with banners.'" Not for him are sermons "that are like picnics into a near-by countryside for innocent exercise and play." Although length is certainly not the prime test of a sermon, who can really say much of anything in twenty minutes! "I am trained," writes Holmes, "by custom of many years, to preach an hour, or until I'm done. If I go over the hour, my congregation thinks that I am in particularly fine form. If I fall short of the hour, and stop at forty or forty-five minutes, they fear that I am ill."

"The true preacher is an advocate, who defends great causes of human need. . . ." With this view of the nature of preaching, it is no wonder that the impact of the personality of John Haynes Holmes has been felt in many areas of social concern. The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People bear his indelible mark. The cause of pacifism (which he advocated through two wars at great personal risk) has seldom had so eloquent an advocate.

Social concern need not be expressed in strident tones. John Haynes Holmes has shown that there can be poetry in the advocacy of the needs and hopes of humanity. It is not accidental that his reading in the poets has been wide. In the light of his interest and outlook, it is understandable that the books of theology have gravitated to the top shelves of his study — slightly out of reach. As he wrote many years ago, "The theologians gather dust upon the shelves of my library, but the poets are stained with my fingers and blotted with my tears."

Theology and theologians may have been neglected over the years of his ministry — but not God. One senses that Holmes is fed by mystical springs; he needs not the speculations of the theologians but rather the instant communion with reality which he finds in the poets and in himself.

Great men pass through the pages of this book, from Kaiser Wilhelm to Mohandas Gandhi. When the history of this period is written, John Haynes Holmes will be given more than honorable mention. Yet, he was proud to walk among these men as a minister

of religion — as a parish minister. It is a sobering thought that even Dr. Holmes has had trouble with church organists and has been guilty of an occasional lapse in the social graces. With the eloquence, the deep insight, the frankness, the wit and humor, which we associate with him, John Haynes Holmes tells his own story in a memorable way. Here is a great friend of our one humanity. I put down this book with the feeling that I had communed with a great soul.

ERNEST CASSARA

Crane Theological School
Medford, Mass.

The Mind and Faith of A. Powell Davies. Edited by WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS.
Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1959. 334 pages. \$5.00.

A. Powell Davies died in September 1957, when he was but fifty-six years of age. Yet he had already won wide spread acclaim for his impassioned preaching against social wrong. He possessed extraordinary skill in the use of the English language, was a gifted satirist, and a person of remarkably nimble wit. Over and beyond these special qualities, he proved himself a pastor with very real insight into human needs and problems.

All this becomes readily apparent in the present volume compiled by Justice William O. Douglas of the United States Supreme Court from Dr. Davies' sermons and speeches. Mr. Justice Douglas has written an excellent biographical and analytical introduction, telling the story of Dr. Davies' life and pointing up some of the most salient points in his thought. The selections are gathered under six main heads: "Counseling," "Democracy vs. Communism," "Law and Justice," "International Responsibilities," "Literary Wit and Wisdom," "Creed and Dogma."

But the book speaks for itself. The headings are, at best, artificial. There is such a sweep to Dr. Davies' writing that most of it cuts across such classifications. At best we may call them points of emphasis. The headings have this value, however: they serve notice upon the reader that here is no ordinary book of sermons. Here is a preacher who understands the aching human heart, and also the evils of the great social complex from which the individual's suffering is often derived. Here is a thinker who can see into the structure of society and can point out why wrongs occur. Here is a prophet who can foresee the woes of millions yet to be, that may well result from our callousness or stupidity today.

The editor was, of course, confronted by an embarrassment of riches, and from this fact the major fault of the book results. It is a book of excerpts — a compendium of choice selections from choice sermons. But there is never enough. The book is long, but no matter where you begin to read you find yourself wishing there were more. You want to know how the paragraphs you are reading were introduced, how they were concluded, or what came in between that was left out.

For Powell Davies was a craftsman. With him each sermon was an artistic whole. And insofar as a 30-minute discourse can be, his sermons were intellectually complete. They did not leave you hanging in the air. You came out somewhere when you were

through listening to him. Maybe you didn't agree — that was a prerogative he was glad to grant you, but at least you knew what you had to accept or to reject. To give excerpts from his sermons is to dismember him. I should rather have had a dozen or twenty of his best sermons, entire, than bits and snatches of a hundred.

But there is an argument for the editor's method. He has given us a cross section of Davies' thought, and this he could not have done by reprinting twenty sermons in their entirety. He has given us a book that is easy to pick up and lay down. Most of all, he has given us a fine compendium of one of the great Unitarian leaders of our time.

This book belongs in the library of every one of us.

DUNCAN HOWLETT

All Souls Church
Washington, D. C.

Frederick May Eliot, An Anthology. Edited by ALFRED P. STIERNOTTE.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1959. xxxi + 300 pages. \$5.00.

Frederick May Eliot came to the attention of all the Unitarians in the United States and Canada in 1934 when he was appointed the Chairman of a Commission of Appraisal. Never one to merely preside over other people's debates, he entered into the finding of facts and their interpretation with personal force and decisive mind. Over the continent it soon became clear that a new vigorous leader had been discovered and, after the Commission's recommendations had been adopted by the Association as the way and the means to reorganization and invigoration, he was elected in 1937 as the President to execute that program which had been so much of his own shaping. Thus he had, as he entered into office, what political leaders call a "clear mandate." It was a mandate, but it was not as clear as supposed. The reorganization was itself full of ambiguities typical of the kind of democratic decision which must take into account contradictory opinions, yet must produce out of diversity a sense of unity and a myth of basic agreement.

For example, Frederick May Eliot urged that the Unitarians needed both stronger centralization and stronger de-centralization of administrative powers; that while the parishes were absolute in their powers, the Association should be referred to as "the Church," and, when his kinsman, Samuel A. Eliot, made a speech at the assembly which was debating the acceptance of the word as a part of the proposed by-laws and demolished the idea of "the Church," Frederick May Eliot simply forgot the word and thereafter used in his own vocabulary the word "denomination," which to him meant the same thing.

More basically the ambiguities were theological. The excitement of the public debate amongst Unitarians about the respective merits of Christian Theism or Humanism as the best loyalties of the religious life cooled, but while public disputations were over, the interior contentions were as alive as ever, and ministers especially felt strongly that this issue remained fundamental. Indeed the chief opposition to Frederick May Eliot's election was offered by those who thought of him as a Humanist. Had he not contributed to the book edited by Curtis W. Reese in 1927, *Humanist Sermons*? The Humanists,

on the other hand, were startled to be told in the Western Conference session in the Third Church in Chicago in 1937 that it would be well for them if they recognized that every named Christian doctrine contained powerful truth and that they were well advised to get down on their knees and pray.

After this Western Conference address, Sydney B. Snow, then President of The Meadville Theological School, was seized by uncontrollable mirth as he tried to walk down the church steps. He said, "In the history of contested office there has never been such a guileless candidate. To Theists he speaks as a Humanist, and to Humanists he offers a program of prayer."

The reader should remember this in his encounter with the selections which Alfred P. Stiernotte has offered in *Frederick May Eliot, An Anthology*. There is apparent logical contradiction throughout the book, but none of it belongs to the political category of "Peace through war" or "Some are more equal than others." If he contradicted himself in public, it was through no hope of gaining adherents by propaganda: he was an honest man at debate within himself, and when he spoke or wrote, he simply made audible or legible the disposition of opposing forces then in effect in his own mind. In this interior discussion, exposed to public view, he was the personification of the diversity, the contradiction, the debate which was in the whole Unitarian body during the time of his service. To a great extent that which characterized what he was pleased to call "the denomination" was his own true character. There is a personal element in these writings, that which is peculiar to the man himself, but that which is his own exclusively is his style, all else is shared in common not with one Unitarian, but with Unitarians of his time. This is Mr. Unitarian with pen in hand. He felt himself to be identified with every Unitarian, however radical or conservative, not out of official requirement but out of the sympathy of his own experience. If the man knew no God, it was understandable because God is unknowable. If the man who does not know God asserts that God does not exist he is to be made "mindful of the need for humility, and to remember that God's reality is not dependent upon our correct conception of his character and nature" (p. 259). In this particular instance he had not produced a contradiction, but a paradox. That is what he always thought he was discovering in himself and in his constituents. It did not occur to him that it was otherwise, for contradictions of fact seemed to him only an immediate judgment: in the long run they would, he thought, prove to be reconcilable. In this hope, he also embodied the total spirit of his constituents who never wavered in the face of the most brutal facts to hold that progress was real, that the irreconcilable took only time and more knowledge to prove agreeable.

He could have a sense of the personal power of Jesus in the midst of Communion, a service to which he was most devoted, yet diminish his feeling by speaking of it as a reconsecration to "ideals" (p. 245). He could in one and the same speech excoriate Christianity for spiritual arrogance (p. 38), and assert that "this does not mean that one religion is as good as another" (p. 39). He could assert, "we stand in the Christian tradition; and unless we are willing to let narrow partisanship and exclusive dogmatism — our own, or that of other Christians — prevent our entering into our birthright, we have in the superb figure of the Nazarene an incomparable source of unifying loyalty" (p. 101), and, with equal enthusiasm urge that Unitarians "must be frankly and vigorously 'more than christians' . . . that the basic faith of all [religions] is identical in essentials" (p. 57). Some Unitarians could believe one or the other of these statements, but most could believe them both, as did their President. Together these Unitarians spoke to one another in a universal language which was in fact so parochial that they alone under-

stood it. That there are "essentials" in all religious systems is an assertion of hope not yet borne out by the painstaking examination of our most qualified University researchers; but what has an ideal to do with a fact, an act of faith with scientific caution!

If the historian will entertain the idea that he can find the whole spirit of Unitarianism speaking through this single voice of the President from 1937-1958, other clues to the condition of the liberal religious life will be found. One might well, for instance, look into the possibility that Frederick May Eliot's theological attitude or lack of theological perspective was a true reflection of the condition of the people. It could be fairly said that his mental approach to religion was highly cultivated in every field of knowledge except that of theology. Just because his mind was rich with political, philosophical, and artistic knowledge, he had right to speak out in wrath against the new critics of liberalism who characterized men like himself as, and he quoted them (pp. 19 ff.), "simple-minded enthusiasts," "inveterate utopians." He was not naive or simple-minded and he had right to be angry, but he was not in the same realm of discourse with them. When theologians wrote ethical essays, he read them carefully, but there is no evidence in the anthology that he read Kierkegaard, Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr as theologians. He did not know, nor did he care to know, the theological foundation of ethics; he only knew that these theologians were belittling man's powers to achieve a better world; that they proposed that there were basic contradictions in human life which were unresolvable in human terms; that they were not confident of the power of human will to perfect human life. They seemed to him to be morally reprehensible, cowering, as he thought, helplessly before the requirements of history; that they were content to be creedal when they should be active. "What is wanted," he cried, "is an idealism, grounded in positive faith in man, that will accurately assess all the practical difficulties before us, seek out the right answer to each of them by the use of plain reason, develop the necessary skills to put that answer into effect, and then set to work with 'calm, undaunted will' to achieve what can and should be done" (p. 21). "When you come right down to it, there are only two kinds of basic faith, the kind that says 'It can't be done' and the kind that says 'It can'" (p. 24). The point is that Frederick May Eliot considered religion to be a matter of morals and, like an able-bodied seaman, he was confident that it was more important to work the ship, especially in a storm, than it was to use the quarterdecks' compass, log, chronometer and sextant. It never occurred to him that the question of direction was a question: he thought anyone could tell that. Getting on with the voyage was his interest.

In this moralism he was a Puritan. He quoted with approval the words of the 1717 Connecticut Election Sermon of Timothy Cutler: "God having made man a rational creature hath (as it were) twisted Law into the very Frame and Constitution of his Soul" (pp. 227, 207). "The moral problems that religion should help to solve are practical, immediate, and urgent; and if, under the guise of giving its proper weight to theological speculation, religion fails to keep its practical value in a central place, then for the religious liberal it has ceased to meet the primary human test." He loved the title of the ancient sermon of Lemuel Briant, "The Absurdity and Blasphemy of Depreciating Moral Virtues," and handled it as a man might a club upon the theologians whom he thought were both absurd and blasphemous. "For those willing to pay this price, the whole moral power of the universe is at hand to help" (p. 217). He called upon men to pay the price, over and over again: the price was self-imposed discipline (p. 92). For him the grace of God, the unearned gift, and especially man's desperate need to receive it, even his own personal need for it, he put down as unworthy and weak. Morality, not theology, was for him the queen of the sciences.

Morality, however, was not the source of his religious power. While he made morality the test of the religious life, the only intelligent meaning of the church, while he thought of the theological enterprise as merely speculative or as an intellectualism which tended to rot the will, he himself turned in deep piety to the mystical way of meeting and being met by the God he could not know. "It isn't a matter of theology at all, but a sense of being in the presence of an authority so sublime, so completely self-authenticating, that there is no longer any possible shadow of doubt as to one's response" (p. 237). "The heart of religion is worship, and what men worship is the reality, not the symbol" (p. 259).

Not much of this mystic quality shines through this anthology. This is no discredit to the editor, for not much was said about it. After all how does one write voluminously upon his traffic with the reality behind the symbol, the self-authenticating power. Besides, it was a personal matter, not a church matter. Puritans are instructed by the church, celebrate or seek for social necessities in public prayer, but their relation to God is curtained and private.

I think if the historians followed this last path, they might find that most Unitarians were well represented by this characteristic of deep, quiet, mystical piety and the strong reticence which keeps it all a secret. This esoteric quality is there and once in the collection he breaks silence and lets you know that that is his secret position: "some of the most priceless of the mystic's possessions are to be had by anyone that truly desires them, and there are treasures for even the humblest seeker" (p. 240).

The editor's instinct seems to be right about this matter, and he concludes the anthology with prayers, although even these have a moralistic tone. The final essay is the one entitled "Toward Belief in God," a suitable valediction.

It would be churlish indeed not to say a word of appreciation to Alfred P. Stiernotte who traced down the fugitive essays, tracked the occasional utterances, and searched the journals, private and public, which contained the material out of which he has wisely selected and arranged the anthology. He has also given us a resumé of Frederick's life and an incisive introduction. I was pleased, having read that introduction last, that he agrees with the chief point I have made. "He could not have risen to the presidency of the Association except by incarnating in his own life the principle of responsible freedom and by demanding it for others." He also is struck by the puritanical determination which characterizes his utterance. But, I do doubt that what I have called ambiguity is the "polarity" Mr. Stiernotte thinks. In a political sense it is true that "His greatness lay in his ability to reconcile, in an inner unity, the liberalism of the questing mind and the commitment of unyielding resolution." But, there are other matters which he could not reconcile, and they quarrelled within him as they continue to contend within us. I mean the relation of Unitarians to other Christian churches, to non-christian religions. I mean the contradiction of having pride in intellectual achievement in all the sciences save for theology, and in calling that science "merely" intellectual. I mean the tolerance which extends a friendly hand toward, say, Buddhist scripture, but shuns the reading of Barth's works. I mean a religion which presents itself as a moral determination to increase righteousness in the world, yet turns secretly and only in the shadowed ways of private mysticism to the source of all righteousness, God.

Goodness, justice, loyalty, devotion to truth, the love of God shine in this book, but peace is not here. Over and again Frederick uses the phrase "quietly and confidently," but this was his prayer and not his condition. He had inherited superb physical, mental and emotional powers, and he kept them all running under the charioteer-whipping of a puritan will. Even in these, his public utterances, composed,

as I know them to have been, in the study that was in his home, that is, surrounded by love and domestic tranquility, his speech is of "salt and iron and vinegar," which phrase he interpreted to mean that "truth and righteousness must be followed for their own sake, quite independent of any material rewards."

Truth and righteousness was what he did follow, full speed, with all the anxieties of a responsible man racing against time: this was the tragedy in him and, if I am right in his representative quality, in us. Certainly those of us who urged him to take a day off, relax, or take a vacation, and preached to him the need for calm and quiet only irritated him; probably because he saw we did not practice what we preached. He knew that there was wrong to be put aright every day, and even at night while he slept; and he knew that there was no reward for the energetic pursuit of righteousness, but that it was a duty to be fulfilled. For another generation, perhaps, it shall be given to know the meaning of God's grace as over against such compulsive virtue, the hush of reconciliation as over against the bugle-call to moral warfare, God as comforter and friend as over against God as captain of the host.

Such grace as he knew was affectionate, mystical and artistic, not theological. He quoted Emerson because it was only fair to do it, but he winced in deep pain because he felt so personally identified that it seemed an attack upon himself: "and yet look at the Unitarian Association and see if its aspect is poetic" (p. 111). He manfully let the criticism go for several paragraphs, but finally he burst out, "After all, it is only hints of the truth that even the greatest artist can give to other men concerning the secret of his calling, as Emerson knew perfectly well" (p. 115). He was himself an amateur painter and poet, but he was a professional in the use and appreciation of prose. Even the most quickly made paragraphs, written with the printer's messenger standing by, are models of order and of the easy clarity which only disciplined work can create. Often his essays begin with a well-turned phrase on a picturesque word which he has found and treasured. Chiefly, and in moments of intuitive truth, his words have the urgency of his life in them, the clarity of his mystic sight, the strength of his soul as, for example (p. 108):

"Is it not time for Unitarians to recognize and proclaim the catholic spirit that is theirs? Is it not time to have done with all that suggests sectarian exclusiveness or denominational false pride? Is it not time for Unitarians to take their places, humbly, hopefully, with the joy of open minds and willing hearts, in the one company of all men who are seeking to find and to know God? If we have the catholic spirit, as well as all our Unitarian saints and poets have had, let us say so. In that common confession we shall find richer fellowship and more abundant power to serve!"

WALLACE W. ROBBINS

*First Unitarian Church
Worcester, Massachusetts*

Bright Galaxy: Ten Years of Unitarian Fellowships. By LAILE E. BARTLETT. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960. 255 pages. \$3.50.

Laile E. Bartlett, in her own right an experienced sociologist but best known in Unitarian circles as the wife of Dean Josiah R. Bartlett of the Starr King School for the Ministry, has written a delightful book about the several hundred Unitarian fellowships now scattered over the continent. Her writing reveals not only sociological conditioning and a wide knowledge of Unitarian affairs, but penetrating insight, a keen sense of humor and a dramatic flair. The reader will be entertained as well as instructed in matters pertaining to Unitarian group dynamics, social psychology and the great variety of ways by which Unitarians in fellowship assembled express religious commitment.

The title of the book is metaphorical, the subtitle historical and the book itself largely sociological. It is strongest in its analysis of group psychology, weakest in its attempt to explain the historical background of the fellowship movement. Somewhere along the line of her personal visits with the fellowships, apparently in too many places for her own peace of mind, Mrs. Bartlett was told that the Unitarian fellowship idea is brand new, "something thought up at 25 Beacon Street just for us." This would never do! Manifestly there must be ancestors even for Unitarian fellowships. Here one recalls the story of the man who, reared an orphan, determined in the heyday of his very successful career to find the best ancestors the local portrait gallery could supply. Mrs. Bartlett's efforts to find the best ancestors for the fellowships that history could supply resulted in an unusually long and completely irrelevant detour through church history. A modern Unitarian fellowship is no more rooted in such groups of the long ago as Montanists, Friends of God, Anabaptists, Levellers, Essenes and Methodist Classes than is the Unitarian movement as a whole. Such historical anti-clerical movements have no logical connection with the fellowships. They are the wrong ancestors. If you must find ancestors for the fellowship movement turn to the organizational mechanism of the Society of Friends, Unity School of Christianity, Christian Science, Moral Rearmament, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, Kiwanis, Unitarian Women's Alliances not connected with a local church, and a hundred other varieties of groups of resident adults, ten or more in number, who come together for mutual helpfulness in some specific project and who are formally associated in their endeavor with a national or continent-wide or world-wide movement. In the case of the Unitarian fellowships, they are groups which are organized for mutual helpfulness in nurturing spiritual values, the grandest project human beings can pursue.

One possible advantage in calling attention to noted religious lay movements of the past is that they lend assurance to members of fellowships that in many instances such groups have been influential far out of proportion to their numerical strength. The greatest disadvantage, beyond the fact that the affinity is fabricated, is to make a case for anti-clericalism as a motive for the organization of fellowships. But the anti-clericalism for which the historical lay groups contended and the anti-clericalism that seems to have arisen unexpectedly with some fellowships are very different things. The old anti-clericalism was against priestcraft and as such wins the admiration of all free churchmen, clergyman included; whereas the anti-clericalism one encounters in fellowships, or better the non-clericalism, is a practical matter of the organization of creative and independent people in some other form of religious association than a church. It is unfortunate that Mrs. Bartlett made such a strong historical case for anti-clericalism for it brings a gnawing apprehension that the fellowship members may feel that they are anti-clerical when they are not. True, many fellowships may get along better without ministerial leadership than do churches of comparable strength, but not because they are opposed

to ministerial leadership. The fellowships are designed to do what a small church might do where the services of a minister are not available. The tendency of fellowships to become churches in areas where population growth and membership strength make church status feasible, and to seek liberal clergymen as leaders where such leadership is available, is proof enough that anti-Unitarian-clericalism is not a serious problem.

The value of the book lies not in the field of history. Even the telling of the simple story of the origin of the current fellowship movement should have included similar ventures of the past, if they were mentioned at all, only as warnings. They had failed. Mrs. Bartlett recalled the efforts of Lewis G. Wilson to form closely supervised lay centers when he was secretary of the American Unitarian Association around 1907 and of some of the State Conferences to organize societies of lay leaders, not to mention the urgings of Jabez T. Sunderland and before him Joseph Priestley. The Illinois Unitarian Conference tried in 1887 to develop the Sunday Circle, "a little church cradled in a home parlor." But all had failed. Mrs. Bartlett's assumption that the current fellowships evolved from these earlier efforts is mistaken. They served only to say what shouldn't be done. The pressure to inaugurate the program of Unitarian fellowships as we know them came from laymen themselves scattered throughout the country in communities that had no Unitarian church. But the American Unitarian Association staff in Boston was cautious and nursed its misgivings. It could see only too well how all other such efforts had failed.

At the behest of Roland Burbank, a long time and effective member of the A. U. A. Committee on Unitarian Extension, the Association in 1945 appointed a special committee of three to study the possibilities of a new lay program. However its chairman, George G. Davis, then Director of Extension, opposed the idea and the committee lay dormant. Many months went by before it gradually became evident to the Department of Extension, from reports of my own experiences of the needs in the field and my researches which pointed to the futility of trying to establish churches wherever the need arose for Unitarian group activity, that the time seemed ripe for the organization of such a movement. The fact of the existence of this committee made it easier to begin the planning process. It was only necessary to prod the committee to get it going. In the planning Mr. Davis swung into active support of the venture. The Board of the Association approved it without debate on October 15, 1947 and voted funds to set up an office and employ a full-time director. The Unitarian movement had staged a quiet revolution. With enthusiasm Mr. Davis recommended Munroe Husbands, a layman, to the position of Director. It was a wise choice.

Mrs. Bartlett has well stressed the independence of each fellowship, its uniqueness, flexibility, fidelity to the needs of its own members, and above all its consciousness that it is meant to represent the Unitarian movement in a community where a church is not planned. Only in exceptional circumstances is a fellowship expected to serve as the nucleus of a church. She is at her best when she is analyzing and making suggestions as to what should be done when a fellowship is being prodded by headquarters to become a church, or embarrassed by the presence of a would-be leader who has been a minister but rejected by his denomination, or invaded by new people who have left a neighboring church in a huff, or being pulled to extremes of political or theological ideology. Such a book will be enormously helpful not only to the personnel in the fellowships, ministers and Regional Directors, but to those who are thinking of starting a fellowship and to students of a religious lay movement that is proving effective in today's world.

LON RAY CALL

*South Nassau Unitarian Church
Baldwin, Long Island, N.Y.*

British Unitarianism, Past, Present and Future. By JOHN KIELTY. London: Lindsey Press, 1960. 48 pages. Available free from the Minns Committee, 64 Marlborough Street, Boston 15 or 63 Beacon Street, Boston 8.

The contents of this invaluable book are the three Minns Lectures delivered in the Boston area last May by the Rev. John Kielty, Secretary of the General Assembly of the British Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. The functions and duties of the author in British Unitarianism are similar to those of the President of the American Unitarian Association in our national scene. He can therefore write and speak of British Unitarianism as "one having authority." No serious student of liberal religion should neglect to procure a copy of this book and read it with avidity and interest. Within forty-seven pages the author has succeeded in presenting a comprehensive and accurate survey of British Unitarianism. Moreover, his task is accomplished with a liveliness of mind that reflects the very *elan vital* of the British movement.

The first chapter is devoted to the historical development of Unitarianism in Great Britain from the sporadic and intellectual movement among individual thinkers of the sixteenth century to the organized Unitarian churches and the General Assembly existing today. The concise pen-pictures of the poet John Milton, the philosopher John Locke and the scientist Isaac Newton as the intellectual forerunners of organized Unitarianism are most illuminating. The discussion of Martineau's *Three Stages of Unitarian Theology* will enable the reader to have a deeper understanding of Unitarianism across the Atlantic. Toward the conclusion of the chapter, the author enumerates the outstanding Unitarian contributions to the life of the nation. If there were a British Hall of Fame, it would have many Unitarians within its walls.

But what of modern Unitarianism? It is in connection with this question that John Kielty has rendered an incalculable service in his second chapter. He traces the development of Unitarianism since 1929 up to the present day. No professional historian has yet penned the story of Unitarianism in this particular period with its great economic depression, its brief era of prosperity, then the Second World War with its destruction of churches and depletion of resources. It was a great testing time for everybody including British Unitarians. With modesty and restraint, our author tells of the gallant and creative activities of British Unitarians faced with poverty, mass unemployment and the evils of total warfare with its destruction of life and property. Despite these difficulties, a Commission on Our Free Religious Faith was set up and after due deliberation published its findings on basic religious questions and beliefs. The denomination also appointed a Commission on the Work of the Churches, raised new money, and reorganized its Religious Education Department. It is a brave story well told. Our author sums up the present position in the following words: "We are through the slough of despond, the skies are lightening, the horizon is shining at last. Much will have to be done yet, but that we have a future is accepted by all."

The concluding chapter is concerned with John Kielty's personal views as to the future of British Unitarianism. But I believe that he speaks for the majority of devoted, loyal British Unitarians. His assessment of the future is realistic. "Wherever a man is denied the right to think, speak, write or worship as his conscience directs, the battle is still to be won." In the final paragraph, John Kielty states what he believes are the tasks ahead and ends with these words: "The future beckons promisingly to men of vision and courage."

HENRY H. CHEETHAM

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Unitarian Church
Charlottesville, Virginia

The Religion of Thomas Jefferson. By HENRY WILDER FOOTE. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960. 86 pages. \$1.25.

Hunted Heretic, The Life and Death of Michael Servetus 1511-1553. By ROLAND H. BAINTON. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960. 270 pages. \$1.75.

The Legacy of the Liberal Spirit. By FRED GLADSTONE BRATTON. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960. 317 pages. \$1.75.

Theodore Parker, Yankee Crusader. By HENRY STEELE COMMAGER. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960. 339 pages. \$1.75.

An anonymous wit once said that a liberal is "a radical with a family." With the appearance of the new Beacon Paperback Series in Liberal Religion it is hoped that more liberals, particularly those who occupy church school classrooms and adult education circles, will take the opportunity to become better acquainted with some of the members of their "family." The four paper-bound volumes which inaugurate the series are reprints of works which, in their hard-cover editions, occupy important places on many a liberal's personal library shelf. May these inexpensive editions serve to occupy important places on church library shelves as well.

The Religion of Thomas Jefferson by Henry Wilder Foote (LR 1)

This investigation of Thomas Jefferson's religious attitudes was originally published under the title *Thomas Jefferson: Champion of Religious Freedom and Advocate of Christian Morals*. With all due respect to the editors, it is the feeling of this reviewer that the original title, though cumbersome, should have been retained in that it affords a more accurate indication of the book's contents than does the title of the reprint. The religion of Thomas Jefferson (if we are to judge on the basis of Jefferson's own words as they are frequently quoted in Mr. Foote's study) was the decision to avoid any religious commitment. The religious importance of Jefferson is found not in the simple libertarianism which he professed, but rather in his vigorous struggle to maintain an atmosphere of religious freedom in which a man had the opportunity to commit himself as his conscience, rather than as his state, might prompt.

Drawing heavily upon his examination of Jefferson's papers, Mr. Foote has given us a book, the grace and charm of which does not impede the reader's realization that Jefferson's struggle was and is our own.

Hunted Heretic, The Life and Death of Michael Servetus, 1511-1553 by Roland H. Bainton (LR 2)

The appearance of any volume from Roland Bainton needs no reviewer's acclaim to recommend it. Acclaim should instead go to the Beacon Press for including such a volume among its initial publications in this series. Thorough scholarship, brilliant writing, animation and clarification of the complex social, political and religious patterns of the sixteenth century — in other words, the standard which readers have come to expect from Bainton — all are evident in this splendid book. Perhaps the most important thing about *Hunted Heretic* is that Bainton here rescues the figure of Servetus from the one-sided analyses to which he has been subject. Neither a defense of a man whose

actions were often indefensible, nor a mis-memorial to a malcontent, Bainton's work has none of the onesidedness to which so much of the writing concerning Servetus errs. The value of the book lies in the author's steady charting of the course which religious bigotry sailed in that bloody century. Bainton's expert navigation serves to remind us that those charts have an accuracy for our own time; he deftly points out the discrepancy involved in denouncing Calvin while attempting to preserve our culture by reducing whole cities to rubble.

The Legacy of the Liberal Spirit by Fred Gladstone Bratton (LR 3)

Mr. Bratton has here produced a far ranging, scholarly and provocative introduction to the concepts of liberalism and the personalities who breathed life into them. Selecting a single individual as representative of an age, the author conducts a tour through seven periods of human history spanning some 2500 years. While the scenes change rapidly, the principles which comprise the theme of the book remain permanent, finding rich expression in the thought of men who, almost invariably, found themselves "out of tune" with their times.

Theodore Parker, Yankee Crusader by Henry Steele Commager (LR 4)

A new introduction and a comprehensive bibliography accompany this noted historian's account of a preacher's progress: Parker the scholar, outstripping the narrow learning of his time; Parker the crusader, cannily choosing the reform to which he gave himself; Parker the spokesman, carrying Boston, New England and the continent toward social and religious responsibility. Here is a book that deserves the re-reading it will surely receive. Commager has done a remarkable job in presenting this man as both the product of his time and the father of ours.

VICTOR H. CARPENTER, JR.

The First Parish
Norwell, Mass.

The Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society (England), Volume XII, Number 1, October, 1959. 51 pages.

In 1915, fourteen years after the creation of the Unitarian Historical Society in the United States, a society of the same name was formed in England. The *Transactions*, edited by the Rev. C. G. Bolam, is now in its twelfth volume.

The current issue opens with an article on "Unitarians and the Labor Church Movement" by I. Sellars, an account of the rise, vicissitudes and decline of the "labor churches" inspired by the Unitarian John Trevor during the 1890's. The labor churches were originally gathered as free religious societies of workingmen but soon became indistinguishable from Independent Labor Party branches or Sunday political forums. The force of the political labor movement, the impossibility of achieving economic ends by spiritual means, and a failure of leadership limited the movement to a maximum of forty societies during an active period of a decade.

The Rev. F. Kenworthy's centenary sketch of "The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, 1859-1959" illuminates the origins and development of a missionary region roughly comparable to the Western Unitarian Conference in the United States. One is struck by the Union's woeful lack of financial resources throughout its history, and by the reluctance of its leaders — recalling that of their counterparts in the Western Conference during the 1860's — to affiliate with the national association in view of the latter's "essentially and avowedly doctrinal" character.

A valuable essay on "The Revision of the Prayer Book by Dr. Samuel Clarke" is contributed by the Rev. A. E. Peaston. He details Clarke's Antitrinitarian revision of the Book of Common Prayer early in the eighteenth century, and Theophilus Lindsey's subsequent (1774) revision of Clarke.

Brief essays on "Unitarian Hymn Writers" and "A 1686 Indulgence and its Licences" conclude the volume.

It is a pleasure to commend the *Transactions* to American readers. Readers of the *Proceedings* may wish to subscribe to our sister publication in England. Inquiries should be addressed to the Editor of the Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex Street, London, W. C. 2, England.

DAVID B. PARKE

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Peterborough, New Hampshire

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ANNUAL MEETING — 1959

The fifty-ninth annual meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society was held Sunday, May 24, 1959 in the Edward Everett Hale chapel of the First Church in Boston.

In the absence of the president, Dr. Duncan Howlett, the honorary vice president, Dr. Sidney E. Mead of Chicago, presided. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p. m.

It was moved and voted that, in view of the fact that the minutes of the 1958 annual meeting appeared in the *Proceedings*, their reading be dispensed with and they be approved as printed.

The assistant secretary, Mr. Parke, reported on the work of the Society during the year. He told of its incorporation under the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in August 1958. Membership, he announced, now stands at approximately 175, and income from membership dues has risen from \$180 to \$240 in the past year. Three seminars, with an average attendance of twenty, were held: in November Dr. George H. Williams spoke on "The Pre-History of Socinianism in Poland," in January Dr. Conrad Wright on "Rational Religion in Eighteenth Century America," and in April the Rev. Frank Walker on "The Contribution of Henry W. Bellows to Post-Civil War Unitarianism." The *Proceedings* has been strengthened by its expansion into a journal of liberal religious history, Mr. Parke reported, adding that the 1960 issue, by vote of the directors, would be devoted to aspects of the life and thought of Theodore Parker. Mr. Parke concluded with an invitation to visitors to become members of the Society.

The report of the treasurer, Dudley H. Dorr, Esq., although entrusted to the assistant secretary was not available. Copies of the report were subsequently mailed to all members of the Society.

In behalf of the Nominating Committee, Dr. Wright presented the following nominees for election for 1959-1960:

<i>For President</i>	Dr. Duncan Howlett
<i>For Vice President</i>	Dr. Henry Wilder Foote
<i>For Secretary-Treasurer</i>	Dudley H. Dorr, Esq.
<i>For Assistant Secretary and Editor</i>	Rev. David B. Parke
<i>For Directors</i> (to serve for three years)	Prof. George H. Williams Dr. Richard D. Pierce
<i>For Honorary Vice Presidents</i>	Dr. Sidney E. Mead Dr. Arnold Crompton

There being no additional nominations, it was moved and voted to instruct the Secretary to cast one ballot for the slate of officers as presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p. m. Dr. Mead introduced Judge Lawrence G. Brooks who gave the annual address on "Frederick May Eliot as I Knew Him" before a large and appreciative audience.

Respectfully submitted,

DUDLEY H. DORR, *Secretary*

by DAVID B. PARKE, *Assistant Secretary*

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THE UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY was founded in 1901 and incorporated in Massachusetts in 1958 to collect and preserve books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures which describe and illustrate the history of Unitarianism; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society's collection is housed at the Unitarian Historical Library, 25 Beacon St., Boston. Books may be consulted at the Library, and certain volumes are available on Inter-Library Loan. For information consult the Librarian.

Seminars on aspects of Unitarian and liberal religious history are held in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Members are invited to participate. Most seminar papers are published in the *Proceedings*.

The Society welcomes into membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join should send their membership fee to the Treasurer.

Annual membership	\$ 2.00
Sustaining membership	\$10.00
Life membership	\$50.00

Each member, whether individual or institutional (i. e. a Unitarian church or Unitarian fellowship), receives a copy of the *Proceedings*. A number of libraries receive the *Proceedings* gratis, and requests are welcomed.

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